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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
UNITARIAN DOCTRINE

CONCERNING THE

SOLE DEITY OF THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST:

BEING

SIX LECTURES,

DELIVERED IN

GEORGE'S CHAPEL, EXETER,

DURING THE MONTHS OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 1835;

IN REPLY TO

The REV. DANIEL BAGOT, M. A.

By the Rev. HENRY ACTON.

REVISED FROM THE SHORT-HAND WRITER'S NOTES.

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EXETER.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The circumstances which called for this public vindication of the Unitarian Doctrine, are sufficiently explained in the beginning of the first and fourth Lectures. The candid reader is requested to bear in mind, that these discourses were necessarily hurried productions. They were not written previous to being delivered; and in preparing them for the Press, from a short-hand writer's notes, the Author has confined himself to simple *revision* and *correction*. Readers who are well acquainted with this controversy, will perceive that the Lecturer has frequently availed himself of the information and reasoning contained in several standard works on the subject. It was impossible to make acknowledgment of this, in every particular instance, when delivering the Lectures; and it is deemed unnecessary to do so in this publication. The Author is willing that his readers should consider him indebted to previous defenders of the sole deity of the Father, to any extent they please; at the same time, he is conscious of having freely used his own judgment, respecting the truth of every assertion, and the validity of every argument, which is here advanced. These Lectures are published at the desire of the Author's much respected congregation. It is highly gratifying to him to find that they are (he believes without a single exception,) strengthened and confirmed in their Scriptural faith, by listening to this controversy. To them, with many thanks for their kindness, and to the sincere Christian inquirer of every denomination, these discourses are presented. May the God of Truth speedily cause the knowledge of his pure gospel to prevail in all the world.

H. A.

Exeter, October 27th, 1835,

of this proceeding? By no means. The clergy of the Church of England, as indeed all other ministers of the Gospel, have an unquestionable right to combat what they believe to be error and heresy, in whatever manner they may deem proper. I only mention these circumstances because they account for others which followed. So unusual a notice, and something which I knew of the reputation of the preacher, induced me to attend and hear those discourses. All who were present will recollect, that the preacher did not proceed simply to demonstrate the truth of his own belief, but soon commenced attacking the opinions, arguments, objections, and modes of reasoning, of those whom he called Arians and Socinians. I witnessed the strong impression which was evidently made on the minds of the audience. I saw a large proportion of my own congregation present. I began to reflect, whether it might not be necessary for me, however unpleasant the task, to make some reply. Still, from various causes, I was reluctant to do so; and although I gave orders to prepare notices, I desired that they should not be distributed, till I had heard a second discourse; and I have every reason to believe, that those instructions were observed. Up to the moment, therefore, of my listening to the second discourse, no demonstration whatever had been given by me that I had any intention of replying to those sermons. I was, in consequence, a little surprised, to hear that respected clergyman say, from the pulpit, that "He knew there was what was called a Unitarian congregation, and what were called Unitarian Ministers, in this city, and that if those Ministers, in their prudence, and wisdom, and sound discretion, should think proper to make any reply to his arguments, he would, if it pleased God, return to this city, and give another course of Lectures on the same subject." I have no right to assume, and I do not assume, that there was any thing of the nature of a threat or a taunt implied in that observation. If there was, it must surely have been occasioned by some misunderstanding, or some false information; for I am persuaded that that respected clergyman is a person incapable of consciously indulging any unprovoked feelings of contempt or unkindness. We heard him declare, how utterly he disapproved of all asperity and acrimony of spirit, in conducting religious controversy, and that he meant entirely to avoid it; and we witnessed how faithfully he abided by his declaration. I cheerfully testify, that as I never heard the principles of Unitarians opposed with greater ability, so neither did I ever hear them opposed with more entire freedom from all bigotry and uncharitableness. I cheerfully testify that the pledge which my reverend opponent gave in his public notice, that he would *temperately* examine the objections of Unitarians, was, so far as relates to the display of any uncharitable feelings, honourably fulfilled. I earnestly hope and pray that I may be able to follow his good example in this respect. It is my

sincere desire to do so; and therefore I urgently beg, that if by any chance, (which I think scarcely possible,) I should appear to say any thing in the slightest degree disrespectful towards that gentleman, you will have the kindness not so to interpret my words; for you may be assured that I can have no such meaning. But from the moment he made that direct allusion, which I have mentioned, to the Unitarian Ministers of this city, I saw clearly that there was but one course for me to pursue. I felt that it was due to myself, due to my respected congregation, and, above all, due to the sacred value and importance of the principles in which I rejoice, that, relying on the support and blessing of God, I should undertake the defence of those doctrines which I believe to be the pure truths of the Gospel. I know the disadvantages I shall labour under. I know the disadvantage of having to treat this subject after it has been so recently discussed, in opposition to my own views, by one of such high ability and various accomplishments. I know likewise the disadvantage of having to plead against the deep religious convictions, not to say, the prejudices, of the great majority of Christians, and even of my actual hearers. Yes! I am painfully sensible of the disadvantage of having the devout feelings of the many arrayed against me, and the sympathies of the few only on my side. Nevertheless, I repeat it, there is but one course for me to pursue; and that is, to maintain the cause of what I hold to be divine truth to the utmost of my power.

On another point I desire to be allowed a word of explanation. I do not undertake to follow closely, step by step, the line of reasoning which has been taken by my opponent, nor to restate and examine precisely every argument and every objection which he has advanced. I have no means that would enable me to do this. It were therefore vain and foolish in me to make any such pretensions. I will endeavour to vindicate the great principle of the strict unity of God,—the sole deity of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In aiming at this object I shall certainly go over the same general grounds, I shall touch upon the same particular arguments, and examine very many of the same passages of Scripture. But this is all that I undertake. Let it be distinctly understood, therefore, if hereafter it shall be said,—“such a particular argument was not employed,” or, “such was not precisely the way in which the argument was stated,”—that, unless I have expressly represented that it was so, I shall not hold myself bound to give any answer to such remarks. Do not suppose from this, for one moment, that I wish to shrink from a fair degree of responsibility for any thing which may appear to just and impartial minds like wilful misrepresentation. I have no such intention. I trust I am incapable of such conduct; and for any thing of *that* kind I willingly hold myself responsible in character. But for minute accuracy, in the restatement of my opponent's arguments and objections, I cannot be answerable, because I have no means that will enable me to

be so accurate. You, who were present at the delivery of those discourses, can judge of this for yourselves in every instance.

Now the subject, as you have been already informed, is the unity, the strict personal unity of God, the sole deity of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which excludes the proper deity of our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I entirely concur, my Christian friends, in all that we have heard respecting the great and solemn importance of entertaining *right* views on this subject. Undoubtedly, our views of many other great principles of the Gospel, our religious thoughts and sentiments on various points, will be in a great measure influenced by the deliberate convictions into which our minds may settle respecting the true nature and dignity of Christ;—and, give me leave to say, not only by such deliberate convictions, but also by any prejudices on the subject which our minds may embrace. Unquestionably, that system of faith which is now commonly reputed to be orthodox, does rest, as for its very foundation, on this doctrine of the proper deity of our Saviour Jesus Christ. This doctrine is the key-stone,—of what? Not, you will remember, (unless you begin by at once assuming the very thing to be proved,) not of the genuine Gospel, but only of that peculiar system of faith which the great majority now believe to be the Gospel, but which many of us, in the free and serious exercise of our judgments on the teaching of the Scriptures, consider to be the mere inventions and traditions of men. Of this system, unquestionably, the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ is the very key-stone. Strike this away, and the entire fabric falls to the ground. Now, I pray you to consider, what does this prove? It proves, as I have said, that it is of great importance we should entertain right views on this subject. But does it show, that it is necessary to be on our guard against error on one side of the question, any more than on the other? against the adoption of Unitarian any more than of Trinitarian views? It is easy indeed, as we have lately witnessed, for any one whose religious convictions induce him to take such a course, to give an entirely one-sided influence to this consideration of the *importance* of the subject. It is easy, for example, to dwell on its importance from its connection with the doctrine of Atonement by vicarious sacrifice, (for in the Scriptural doctrine of Atonement, simply considered, we all believe,) but I say the doctrine of Atonement by vicarious sacrifice—the doctrine of Salvation by Faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ—and other supposed orthodox tenets. He who begins by expatiating on the importance of the doctrine of the deity of Christ on these grounds, is sure to carry along with him, in his argument, the earnest wishes and sympathies of the great majority of Christians. He knows, that it is not so much with the abstract doctrine of our Saviour's deity, as with those other connected doctrines, that the religious hopes and fears of Christian people are at present most closely associated.

He knows, therefore, that by adopting such a course, he carries along with him, from the commencement, not so much the calm, impartial judgments, as the agitated feelings of his hearers, who are waiting with anxious hearts to find that he can completely establish his doctrine. All this is well enough in a professed advocate for the Trinitarian system. But I wish you to consider, whether this be precisely the frame of mind which is best suited for a cool, unbiassed examination of the evidence, on both sides of this important question? I think decidedly not. In order to take a dispassionate view of the subject, it is necessary, either to leave the consequences entirely out of consideration, until we have made up our minds respecting the truth, or else, if we consider the consequences on one side, to consider them also on the other. Suffer me, then, to mention a few particulars in which I, speaking as a Unitarian, regard the subject as highly important. Remember—I do not deny the solemn consequences of a wrong decision as they are viewed by the Trinitarian. I have considered them often, and, I hope, seriously. But I simply desire, in justice to my own argument, to point out to your attention, that there are solemn consequences following from a wrong decision *on either side of the question.*

First. It is of extreme importance to entertain right views on this subject, because, if you believe in the deity of Christ, and this doctrine should not be true, then do you most unnecessarily confuse the great doctrine of the unity of God, which is admitted on all hands to be one of the fundamental principles of revealed religion. I must not say, indeed, that you entirely overthrow and destroy this doctrine. I know that if I were to say this, I should be charged with misrepresentation. I only say, therefore, that by believing in the proper deity of Jesus Christ, you bring great *obscurity* upon that glorious principle of revelation, and of all true religion, that there is but one God. Is it not so? You believe in and worship two, nay three, divine persons. If this be the doctrine of the Scriptures, we are unquestionably bound to receive it. But if this be an error, as I firmly believe it is, then do you, who entertain it, most unjustifiably bring in the perplexing idea of some kind of plurality into your conceptions of God, who in the Scriptures is repeatedly and solemnly declared to be *ONE*. Nor is it barely the *idea* of plurality which is thus introduced into the believer's mind; but there are many peculiar *feelings* arising out of this idea, which must necessarily affect his character and conduct as a worshipper of God. You see, therefore, the great importance of entertaining right views on this subject.

Secondly. A correct judgment on this question is extremely important, because, if you believe in and worship Jesus Christ as properly God, (though a distinct person from the Father,) and if this should be an error, then are you chargeable, however unwittingly, with worshipping the creature instead of the Creator. Observe; I do not affirm absolutely, that Trinitarians

do worship a mere creature. This were to pronounce that my own opinion is certainly right, and the opinion of Trinitarians certainly wrong. But I say that, since you certainly worship Christ as God, if he be not so, then do you manifestly worship the creature instead of the Creator. Our Lord Jesus Christ is either himself God, or he is but a creature of God. There is no middle belief. If you should be mistaken in your doctrine of his proper deity, therefore, you plainly do that which Jehovah has solemnly declared shall not be done, by *giving His glory to another*. You see then, again, in this point of view, the extreme importance of correct views on this subject.

Thirdly. If you believe in the proper deity of Christ, and this doctrine be not true, then do you, entirely through your own error, by your own misinterpretation of the Scriptures, burden divine revelation, the highest and best gift of God to mankind, with the astoundingly unreasonable doctrine, that the infinite, eternal, immutable God, appeared on earth in the form of a human being! This is a doctrine which, whether true or false, some of its most zealous advocates have acknowledged to be such as "makes reason stand aghast." It is a doctrine which, whether true or false, has undoubtedly contributed much to prejudice the minds of reasonable men against the Christian Religion. Here, then, we perceive again, the very great importance of right views on this subject.

Now, do not misunderstand my object in making these remarks. I have no wish to excite blind fears in any man's mind against the adoption of the Trinitarian faith. I simply desire to convince you, that there are serious consequences to be apprehended from a wrong decision, on either side of this great question. The respected clergyman to whom I am opposed in this discussion, told his hearers in the outset, that he considered us who deny the deity of Christ to be in a state of dangerous error. He said indeed, at the same time, that he, as a fallible mortal, would not take upon himself to judge us. I thank him for that sentiment, so worthy a charitable and enlightened minister of the Gospel. But yet he assured his hearers, that he does consider us to be in a state of very dangerous error. Now, if this assertion gives my opponent any advantage in the controversy, which perhaps it may, I cheerfully submit to the disadvantage. I cannot here retaliate. I have no hesitation in telling my Trinitarian hearers, that if they have diligently sought for truth, if they are perfectly sincere in their present views, if they apply their principles to the regulation of their hearts and conduct, then, although I do consider them to be in error, I do not consider them to be in any real spiritual danger. For I am persuaded, that the God of infinite goodness and mercy will never suffer the everlasting happiness or misery of his creatures to be determined by their subjection to, or escape from, a mere involuntary error of judgment.

I perceive that there are one or two other preliminary topics, which it will be most convenient to dispose of here, before I proceed to the main argument. It was said, by the preacher to whose discourses I am referring, that we who reject the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ have no exclusive claim to the title of *Unitarians*. It was said that they who believe in the deity of Christ, and in the doctrine of the Trinity, are as strictly *Unitarians* as we are. I was astonished to hear such a remark from a man of an acute and sensible mind. We ought surely to be rejoiced to hear this. Our name has long been a term of reproach in the religious world. I believe that many thousands have held our opinions who have been ashamed to be called by our name. It is a pleasing change to see these circumstances reversed; and as Trinitarians now begin to claim our denomination, we may hope they will soon be brought to embrace our doctrines. But seriously, my brethren, it does appear to me, that this objection to our exclusive use of the name *Unitarian* is founded on a palpable blunder. You say that you, who believe in the Trinity, are Unitarians as well as we? How is this? Because, say you, we believe that the three persons of the godhead are but one God as well as you. I grant it; but you might as justly claim to be called Unitarians because you believe God delivered the Israelites from Egypt by the hand of Moses, or because you approve the Philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton. The term *Unitarian* does not mean, and never did mean, simply a believer in one God, as distinguished from polytheists. How can it mean this, seeing that it is a term which has arisen out of disputes within the Christian Church, where all parties have ever professed to believe in only one God? I entreat you to consider, to what conclusion this objection manifestly leads,—a conclusion which Trinitarians will be the last persons to admit. Are not *Trinitarian* and *Unitarian* directly correlative and opposite terms? Does the name *Trinitarian*, then, signify a believer in three Gods? You will answer, indignantly, No! it means a believer in three divine persons in one God. Well then, the name *Unitarian*, which is its correlative, does not mean simply a believer in one God, but a believer in the strict personal unity of God, in direct opposition to the Trinitarian doctrine. Do you believe in the unity of God in this sense? Certainly not. How then can you be Unitarians as well as we?

It is not long since that a distinguished Trinitarian divine, a dignitary of the Church of England, brought forward this objection, declaring that all who embrace the faith of the Established Church are properly *Unitarians*. A short time afterwards, a great legal Authority declared, that the name *Unitarian* is so utterly inconsistent with the profession of Christianity, that for any persons to call themselves Unitarian Christians, was no less absurd than to call themselves French Englishmen! The lawyer, however presumptuous in his

judgment, did understand the meaning of the term ; the divine, to whose vocation such knowledge might be supposed to belong, had completely mistaken its meaning.

Let us now proceed to the more immediate discussion of our subject. The question in dispute, as we have heard it stated, relates to the *proper Deity* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not merely to his *Divinity*, in any inferior sense. We have been told, indeed, that Unitarians sometimes profess to believe in the *divinity* of Christ, meaning only that they acknowledge his divine mission and office. Perhaps it was intended, by this, that we employ deceptive language on this subject. If so, I utterly deny the justice of the charge, as regards Unitarians in general. To the best of my knowledge, this mode of speaking has never been common amongst us ; nor do I believe it has ever been resorted to for purposes of wilful deception. If this has been done, I join cordially in condemning all such mean evasions. Certainly, the question in dispute between us relates to the *proper Deity* of Christ. The enquiry is, whether Jesus Christ is himself truly and properly God.

I am also ready to acknowledge, that the question is not whether there be, or be not, more than one God. It is said to be admitted, on the Trinitarian side, that there is but one God ; and I am very willing to take it so for the present. Do not forget, however, that this admission brings upon you, as a Trinitarian, the difficulty, either of showing, how there can be more than one divine person, each being truly and properly God, or else of acknowledging that you cannot show this, and therefore that the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning God is a strange and perplexing mystery. If there were no such admitted principle of the unity of God, you would of course be placed in no such difficulty. You would then merely have to show, that each of your divine persons has just claims to be regarded as God, and the whole question would be settled. But it being laid down, at your own request, as a postulate, an axiom, a first principle not to be disturbed, that there is but one God, I cannot allow you to overlook the unenviable situation in which this places you, as the advocate for a plurality of divine persons. I feel myself justified in calling upon the Trinitarian, at the outset of this argument, to be very cautious that he does not, by his own hasty interpretation of the Scriptures, introduce a contradiction, or any thing like a contradiction, to that which he himself acknowledges to be a first principle of true and revealed religion.

But on this point, we have lately heard it said, that “ these Unitarians, as they call themselves, must not be allowed to set up their preconceived notions of Unity. What is Unity ? ” we are asked. “ Let the Socinian define it, if he can. I defy the Socinian to tell me what Unity is. Let him bring any instance of Unity from nature, and I will undertake to shew that it involves some kind of plurality. ” Now, my brethren, I say that all this

is unmeaning talk. Preconceived notions of Unity! What, must we go to the Bible to gain our notion of Unity? This seems to me forbidding men to do that, which by the very constitution of their minds they cannot avoid doing. Every mortal must have some notion of Unity, before he goes to the study of divine truth in the Bible. Perhaps we cannot strictly define Unity; and perhaps a reflecting person will immediately perceive why we cannot do this. A definition necessarily consists of an enumeration of the parts or qualities of the thing defined; and as Unity has no parts, it may therefore be impossible to define it in words, with strict logical precision. But what then? Does it follow that we cannot understand it, that we have no clear notion of Unity? By no means. I think, at all events, I may safely undertake to define Unity, when the Trinitarian shall define to me the difference between a divine person and a God. But I say again, that all this is unmeaning talk. Whether I can define it or not, every man who does not suffer himself to be deluded by theological casuistry, must know that the idea of Unity is one of the simplest and clearest ideas which the human mind can entertain. There is nothing in this subtle disquisition about Unity, which will apply in religion to the argument of the Unitarian, at all more forcibly than it will apply in arithmetic to the reckoning of an Accountant. I know, that in almost every instance of Unity in the works of art or nature, there is involved some kind of plurality. Yes, in one pound there are many shillings, in one house there are many rooms, in one tree there are many branches, in one nation there are many men. But after all, there is but one pound, one house, one tree, one nation; and I contend that the idea which we have of Unity, when we say this, is as distinct and comprehensible an idea as any which the understanding can embrace. Each shilling is not a pound, each room is not a house, each branch is not a tree, each man is not a nation. I maintain, therefore, that it signifies nothing what plurality of persons, or distinctions of any kind, you imagine to exist in the Godhead. Each person or distinction is not in himself, or itself, truly and properly God; or if it be so, then it is not true, in any warrantable or conceivable sense of the word Unity, that there is but one God. But I have no desire to treat of this subject on grounds of human reason merely. I am always glad to take my stand on the ground of Scripture,—to set my foot firmly on the rock of divine revelation.

Let us advance therefore to the investigation of the Scriptural evidence. How shall we proceed? We have agreed upon it, as an axiom, a first principle not to be disturbed, that there is but one God. Will it also be admitted, that the Father, the being or person in the Scriptures denominated the Father, is God? In general this likewise has been admitted. But my opponent on this occasion has a new way of conducting this old controversy. He thinks this ought not to be admitted. He contends that we Unitarians should be first called on to prove

that the Father is God, and then he will undertake to prove, by arguments of the same kind and force, equally numerous, equally strong, equally unambiguous and decisive, that the Son also is God. There is some novelty in this mode of proceeding; and in a beaten controversy like this, it is refreshing to meet with something new. I therefore gladly accept his proffered conditions. I think them exceedingly favorable to my own argument as a Unitarian. I could not recommend a more satisfactory method of investigating the evidence of the Scriptures on this subject. By all means, I say, observe first, how numerous, how direct, how explicit, are the passages of holy writ which prove that the Father is God. But we shall not for this purpose, as my reverend opponent strangely imagines, go to the 1st verse of the 1st Chapter of Genesis—"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." We shall not go there, because the *Father* is not there mentioned by this name; and therefore I do not exactly see what need there was to get up this shew of confuting the Unitarian, when in fact the preacher must have known, that he was wandering from the true grounds of the controversy as far as the poles are asunder.

We shall go to those passages of the Old and New Testament, in which Almighty God is expressly spoken of under the name of *Father*. Such passages there are even in the Jewish Scriptures; though it is in the Christian Scriptures, that we find this made the distinguishing and peculiar name of the true God. But we read in Malachi (Ch. 2. v. 10.) "Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?" and it is evident from the answer of the Jews to our Saviour, (John Ch. 8. v. 41,) that they recognized this title as belonging to their Jehovah. We go at once, however, to the New Testament. We read, (in John Ch. 4. v. 23.) "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the *Father* in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit." We read (in Matthew Ch. 11. v. 25.) that Jesus said, "I thank thee, *O Father*, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." And again, (in Luke Chap. 12. v. 31—32) "Seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your *Father's* good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Again, (in John Ch. 17, v. 11,) Jesus exclaims, "Holy *Father* keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me;" and again, (in the 25, v.) "O righteous *Father*, the world hath not known thee." But there can be no occasion to multiply quotations of this kind. We all know, that this was the name by which Jesus Christ himself uniformly addressed and worshipped the true God. I suppose I may say, without exaggeration, that the name is applied to God several hundred

times in the New Testament. Thus then, without any comparing, or inferring, or deducing, I lay before you a great number of passages of Scripture, in which the person denominated the *Father* is clearly recognised as God.

Now, it being acknowledged that there is but one God, and it being thus proved, by ample testimony of holy writ, that the Father is God, are we not justified in concluding at once that the Father *alone* is God? To my astonishment we are told, No! Why not? Because, as I am assured, in these passages the name *Father* is not applied to God personally considered, not in his personal distinction, as one of the members of the godhead. I am told, that the name is in these instances used merely as a general descriptive title of the Supreme Being, describing his relations to his creatures, as their Maker and Preserver. I answer, that I know this full well. I believe that, not only in these passages, but in every other passage of Scripture in which the name of *Father* is given to God, it applies to him, not in respect to any personal distinction from other supposed members of the godhead, but always in reference to his moral relations towards his human creatures. It is one of my very strongest objections to the Trinitarian doctrine, that it tends to destroy the solemn, holy charm, which belongs to this Scriptural name of God,—as an illustration of his tender mercy and loving kindness, drawn from the nearest and dearest relation of human beings, that between parent and child,—and substitutes in its place a vain scholastic, metaphysical, incomprehensible notion of some personal distinctions in the godhead, concerning which we read not a word in the Scriptures, and from which we can derive no moral or spiritual edification. I wish, moreover, to be told, by what rule of right reasoning I am to be called upon to admit, in this stage of the argument, that the name *Father* ever does refer in Scripture to a personal distinction in the godhead. I am pursuing the inquiry in the way which my opponent declares to be proper. In this stage of the argument therefore, at all events, I claim all these passages as proofs that the Father is God; and since you yourself admit that there is but one God, I maintain, on these simple grounds, that the Father *alone* is God. However, I do not wish here entirely to close the argument. If you can prove to me, from other passages of Scripture, that the Son also is God, I must needs submit my judgment to such authority. I will not obstinately shut my mind against all further evidence. But rest assured, that you shall not easily shake my confidence in the conclusion which appears to me to follow so irresistibly from all these passages. I shall hold fast to them;—for they are to me precious evidences of a precious and glorious truth, not a mere speculative dogma, but a truth which, to my mind, is connected with all that is most beautiful and most consolatory in the divine religion of the Gospel.

Strange as it may seem, however, I am confidently told, that all which has hitherto been admitted or proved is nothing whatever to the purpose. I have been told, that I may prove, or take for granted, that there is but one God; I may prove that the person or being denominated the Father is God; I may prove, or take for granted, that Christ and the Father are two distinct persons; I may prove, or take for granted, that Jesus Christ was a man; I may bring forward millions of proofs of each of these propositions; and yet all this is nothing whatever to the purpose, in reference to the question, whether Jesus Christ himself be God! I say, peremptorily, that I will not allow this. I know, indeed, that there is still something more for the Unitarian to do, before he has thoroughly dislodged the Trinitarian from his skillfully fortified position, before he has driven him out of all the labyrinths and sinuosities of his complicated system. I acknowledge this; but yet I say, it is most extravagant to affirm that all which has hitherto been proved is nothing whatever to the purpose. I contend that it is a great deal to the purpose. I will tell you why, and how. Because, it being admitted that there is but one God, that the Father is God, that Jesus is a distinct person from the Father, and that Jesus Christ was a man,—all this being admitted or proved,—there falls upon you entirely the tremendous burden of proving that nevertheless Jesus Christ is God! I entreat you to consider the nature of this new proposition, which you now aim to establish, in its relation to other propositions which are already established. Consider again the serious consequences of leading yourself, by mere inferential reasoning, into error on this point, and thereby obscuring the great doctrine of the Unity of God. I am aware that there are grounds on which the Trinitarian may still take his stand, and pertinaciously maintain that his opinion is not yet confuted. But if I know anything of the nature of moral evidence, there is nothing which is more likely to mislead a man of acute mind, than the habit of insisting on a strictly logical *demonstration* of a moral question. Such questions are almost always to be determined, not by absolute demonstration, but by the general weight and balance of moral probabilities.

However, I understand the argument of my opponent to stand thus. He contends that, although it has been established that there is but one God, that the Father is God, and that Jesus Christ is a distinct person from the Father, yet that I must further prove, by some positive evidence of Scripture, that the Father *alone* is God, or else I must shew, that his alleged evidence for the proper deity of the Son is inconclusive. I will not shrink from the work allotted me in either respect.

First, then, to prove by some positive evidence of Scripture, that the Father *alone* is God. I refer you confidently to the 17th Chap. and 3rd v. of the Gospel according to John. Our Saviour himself, addressing the *Father* in prayer, says expressly, "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the

only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Now, here is a solemn declaration from the lips of Jesus himself, that the *Father* is "the only true God." And observe, it cannot be said that the name *Father* is here used in that general sense, which is supposed to include the other two persons of the Trinity. This cannot be said, because the Son himself is here speaking of and to the Father, and he says "THEE *the only true God.*" But we have lately heard it remarked, (as far as I understood the preacher,) that the Unitarian can derive no argument from this passage, because it is not affirmed that the Father is the *only* God, or *alone* God, but merely that he is *the only true God*. The qualifying word *only*, we were told, is attached to the adjective "true," and not to the substantive "God." I may admit this; but I see no force whatever in the observation. Suppose the Father is not the only God. Indeed, I know that he is not the only God; for I read in Scripture that there are "gods many." But if he be "the only *true* God," that is quite sufficient for my purpose. We, as Christians, are surely not to acknowledge and worship any God but the *true* God. I maintain, therefore, that the testimony of this passage to the sole deity of the Father is clear and decisive. I am not in the habit of hurling defiance at my theological opponents; but I must declare, with all sincerity, that I can see no possible way of fairly evading this testimony.

I refer you, in the next place, to the 8th. Ch. and 6. v. of the 1st. Epistle to the Corinthians: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." If it had here been the intention of the Apostle expressly to contradict the Trinitarian doctrine, I cannot conceive how he could have found language more pointedly to his purpose. You will observe, that the Apostle does not merely say that there is but one God. The person, (if we must have recourse to that distinction without a difference of which Trinitarians are so fond,) the person who is the only true God is here expressly mentioned, and it is declared to be the *Father*. Then, in the very next words, as if on purpose to remove all ground for doubt or cavil, the Apostle proceeds to speak of Jesus Christ as a distinct person from the Father, and sustaining a different relation towards mankind. Having said that the Father is the only true God of whom are all things, he adds immediately that Jesus Christ is the only Lord of Christians, by or through whom they receive all spiritual blessings.

Thus it is again proved, by positive evidence of Scripture, that the Father *alone* is God. Yet we are confidently told, that all this does not by any means establish the truth of the Unitarian doctrine; for that evidences as numerous, as explicit, and as strong, nay, in some cases even stronger, can be found to prove that the Son is God likewise. I am filled with unfeigned astonishment, to hear any man venture on such a

bold assertion. I verily believe that it is not the general conviction of rational and sober-minded Trinitarians. There is one fact which seems to render this opinion very improbable. You know, that within the Christian Church there never has existed any doubt that the Father is God ; but in all ages there have been Christians, and serious and intelligent Christians too, who have both doubted and denied that the Son is properly God. How, then, can any man take upon himself to set up his own judgment, thus confidently, in opposition to the universal experience of the Christian Church? Surely there must be some delusion here.

I proceed immediately to the other part of my allotted task,—to show that the alleged evidence for the proper deity of Christ is either irrelevant or inconclusive. Now, I am willing to acknowledge that this is the most difficult portion of my work, as an advocate for the Unitarian faith. But in making this admission, I do not mean to allow for a moment, that there is any *real* evidence in the Scriptures for the proper deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The difficulty arises entirely from other circumstances. I beseech you to consider that, in this part of the argument, the Trinitarian, whether right or wrong, enjoys at present a singular advantage. He has, in general, merely to give to certain passages of Scripture that application, and that meaning, in which they are already commonly received. In arguing, especially, before a promiscuous congregation, ninety-nine out of every hundred of his audience may never have heard of any other application, or any other meaning, of those passages. But an advocate for the Unitarian doctrine, whether right or wrong, has in general to shew, either that the passages commonly supposed to apply to Christ do not apply to him,—or else, that the sense commonly attached to those passages is an erroneous sense. In this part of the argument, therefore, the Trinitarian can, as it were, travel over more ground in a quarter of an hour, than the Unitarian can traverse in an hour. And all this, I contend, without implying in the least that the Unitarian is wrong, and the Trinitarian right, in the interpretation of those passages. You may say, indeed, that this is my own fault, because I will not abide by the plain, obvious meaning of the language of holy writ. This is your account of the matter. But I may answer, that it is altogether *your* fault, because you, and your predecessors in the Trinitarian faith for many centuries, have entirely perverted men's views of the meaning of Scripture, and left to others the task of correcting those erroneous views. I am firmly persuaded, that this is the chief reason that more persons do not at present embrace the Unitarian doctrine; and this persuasion causes me to entertain great and sincere respect, not only for the motives, but also for the understandings, of those who continue to believe in the Trinity, notwithstanding what appears to my mind such clear and strong proof of its being a groundless error.

You will suffer me to read you a few remarks in confirmation of this opinion, from one whose judgment on this subject is entitled to the highest respect. The writer whom I shall quote, is the Rev. Joseph Blanco White. Many of you may remember something of his history. He was originally a Catholic Priest in Spain, but being converted to Protestantism he came over to this country, more than twenty years since, and took orders in the Church of England: He has of late years been a member of the household of the present enlightened Archbishop of Dublin; but having now become, from his persevering study of the Scriptures, a decided and professed Unitarian, he has of course left that situation, and the communion of the established Church. These are his words on the subject of which I am treating: "Argumentative discussion on the divinity of Christ is particularly apt to allure the mind into the snares of verbal criticism concerning individual passages. That subject, on the contrary, should be settled by means of the *collective* impression conveyed by the writings of the New Testament; preceded, however, by a careful examination of the preconceived notions by which education has prepared us all to attach the orthodox meaning to certain leading words and phrases of Scripture. This is the great difficulty. We are brought up under the most deliberate *party prejudices*, sanctioned by the most awful spiritual fears. Unless, therefore, our first care is to examine their real worth, the unassisted reading of the Scriptures must mislead us. To refer a Trinitarian in doubt to the Scriptures *only*, has, indeed, a great air of candour; but if the person thus sent to that supreme but mute authority has been most assiduously taught to understand it only in one sense, and kept in perfect ignorance of all that has and may be said to prove *that* sense erroneous, his mental associations leave him no choice: it is like inviting a man to venture his all upon dice which have been previously clogged, and shaming him, on the score of impartiality, from listening to those who engage to shew him where the trick lies. Nevertheless, in my own case, I solemnly declare that I employed no Unitarian works to counterbalance the prejudices of my education. I never read any defence of Unitarianism, till, in 1818, the study of the New Testament *alone* had made me a Unitarian."—*Orthodoxy and Heresy*. Preface, p. x.

I will now commence my examination of those passages of Scripture, to which the Trinitarian appeals in proof that Jesus Christ is God. It is plain, however, that I cannot examine *all* such passages; but I will conscientiously, and to the best of my knowledge, select those passages which I understand to be considered the strongest. If any person shall choose to say, that I pass by other texts because I feel that they tell against me, and know not how to answer them, I have no alternative but to submit to the influence of this representation; but I

protest against it, as unjust and groundless. It is want of time alone which prevents me from considering every text that has been produced.

The first passage to which I will call your attention, is in the 9th Ch. and 6. v. of the Prophecy of Isaiah. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." You have heard it said, that Unitarians evade this decisive proof of the godhead of Christ, by alleging that the prophecy relates to King Hezekiah. If it be meant, that Unitarians represent this prophecy as relating to Hezekiah *exclusively*, I answer that this is not true of Unitarians in general. I scarcely know of more than one Unitarian writer, who has maintained this opinion. If it be meant that Unitarians refer this prediction to Hezekiah in the first place, and in an inferior sense, whilst they refer it likewise and chiefly to Christ, then I answer that many Trinitarians have done the same. It has been commonly thought, that there is this kind of double application in many prophecies of the Old Testament. But I repeat the assertion, that Unitarian Christians in general have not referred this prophecy to Hezekiah *exclusively*. Turning to my shelves, in preparing for this Lecture, I find no less than six distinct treatises on this prophecy, written by Unitarians, on the express admission and acknowledgement that it relates to Christ. This is likewise my own opinion. Now, it has been well observed, that the expressions in this passage are all formed in a style of royalty. They foretel the appearance of a *Prince*, of a Ruler, one who should have the government upon his shoulders. This will be allowed to be generally descriptive of our Saviour's power and authority. We know that he is styled a King, and the Gospel dispensation is called a Kingdom, in the Scriptures of the New Testament. The prophecy, moreover, sets forth, concerning this royal child who was to be born, that his name should be called *Wonderful*. This epithet is sufficiently applicable to our Saviour. No one who believes in the Scripture History of his birth, his miracles, his doctrine, his resurrection, and, more marvellous than all, his holy, spotless character, can doubt for a moment that he is justly described as *wonderful*. It is likewise said, in the prophecy, that this child who was to be born should bear the name of Counsellor. Surely this likewise was an epithet exceedingly applicable to our Saviour. He is justly styled *Counsellor*; for "the spirit of the Lord rested upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." He was in the bosom of the Father, intimately acquainted with his divine will and counsels. The spirit of God was given unto him without measure. There is no truth, or knowledge, or wisdom, which we as mortal and sinful

creatures can desire to receive, but he is able to communicate it to us fully and infallibly. Then it is further declared, in the prophecy, that the child to be born should be called by the names of "Mighty God," and "Everlasting Father". It is not said, you will observe, that he *is* Mighty God, but only that he should be so *called*. This would appear to indicate at once, that these epithets are applied to him descriptively, to describe some extraordinary circumstances or qualities belonging to him, and not as proper names. It is worthy of remark, that all the other epithets occurring in this passage, are simply descriptive, such as "Wonderful, Counsellor, Prince of Peace." These epithets are manifestly used to shew what kind of a person the predicted child should become, his peculiar qualities, and his distinguished character. Surely, then, it may be considered somewhat strange, if in the midst of these there should occur one which is not meant to be properly descriptive, but to be taken as a proper name, or peculiar title, "*The* Mighty God." Let us therefore consider, by examining the application of them in other passages, whether the Hebrew words here translated "Mighty God", may not be likewise understood as merely descriptive epithets, given to a person who is not properly God, but who is distinguished by some extraordinary qualities. With respect to the word גבור GEBUR, translated *mighty*, there can be no difficulty. The word אל AL, or EL, translated *God*, is the only word which requires consideration. The very same word, (in the plural, as is most common,) is in Exodus, 7th c. and 1st v., applied to Moses, and translated God: "I have made thee a God to Pharaoh." It is also several times applied to the Judges of Israel, and translated *Judge*, or *Judges*, in our common version of the Scriptures; as in Exodus c. 21, v. 6; c. 22, v. 8 and 9; 1st Samuel c. 2, v. 25; and in several other places. Undoubtedly, this word is often applied to the true God; but since it is likewise often applied to human beings, and signifies in itself nothing more than *strong*, or *mighty*, it cannot of itself prove the proper Deity of the person to whom it is applied. For instance, in the book of Ezekiel, c. 31, v. 11, the very same epithet אל EL, is given to Nebuchadnezzar, and translated "*mighty one*:" "I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen;" and again it occurs, in the plural, in c. 32, v. 21, and is there translated *strong*: "The strong among the mighty" אלי גבורים—the same two words as in the 9th of Isaiah, only in the plural number. Again it is found in the Book of Job, c. 41, v. 25, and there translated "*the mighty*" in our common version: "When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid." We see, therefore, very plainly, that it is not a peculiar title of the true God, but may be applied descriptively to any great and powerful person. It has been so understood in this passage by many learned Trinitarian authorities. The great

Reformer, Martin Luther, in his German version of the Bible, has rendered the two words *mighty*, *hero*, or *strong*, *hero*; (*Kraft, Held.*) Luther cannot surely be suspected of any sectarian bias, in respect to the meaning of this prophecy. In this descriptive sense, then, this epithet also was very applicable to our Saviour, who was to be a great spiritual Potentate or Ruler, mighty in power, wisdom, and authority. It is likewise said, in this place, that the person to be born should be called "Everlasting Father." The words so translated may be justly rendered, "Father" (in the sense of author, or founder,) "of the age to come," or "Father of the future age." Bishop Lowth, a most accomplished Hebrew scholar, in his learned and beautiful translation of this prophet, has rendered the words thus, "Father of the everlasting age." This, again, is very descriptive of our Saviour's character and office, as the Author of the Gospel Dispensation of truth and righteousness. Lastly, the person to be born is called, "Prince of Peace." This is clearly very applicable to Jesus Christ, and beautifully descriptive of his heavenly work and character. He came to make our peace with God, and to reconcile us unto the Father. He came to promote peace on earth, between man and man, nation and nation. He alone, by our sincere faith and obedience towards him, can give us that true peace of God which passeth all understanding. Thus, then, I have shewn, that every part of this prophecy is strikingly suitable to the character of our Saviour, without in the least degree implying his proper deity.

I would just observe, that I know there is in this passage, as in many other passages of Scripture referring to Jesus Christ, a certain complexity of construction, a sort of contrast between the lowly and the great. But I contend, that we should endeavour to account for this complexity, and this contrast, not by hypotheses, but by facts. It is declared here, for instance, that the person foretold should be a *child*, should be *born*; and yet he is described as *wonderful* and *mighty*. How is this to be accounted for? The Trinitarian accounts for it by supposing that Christ had two natures, the human and the divine. But this is altogether his own invention and hypothesis. We should rather explain the circumstance by the help of facts,—of that which we know, not that which we may suppose;—and it is a fact, indisputably taught in the Scriptures, that our Lord Jesus Christ, although a man by nature, was in office and authority the best beloved Son of God, invested with the highest power and authority from heaven, that he might be hereby constituted a Prince and a Saviour unto men.

The next passage of Scripture to which I will call your attention, is in the beginning, of the 6th Chap. of this prophecy of Isaiah. We there read, that the prophet beheld the glory and majesty of God in vision. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Undoubtedly this was Jehovah, the only true God.

Now in the 12th Chap. of John's Gospel at the 40th v., it is supposed, and I believe rightly, that certain words uttered by the prophet in this connection are referred to by the Evangelist. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." Then the Evangelist immediately adds, v. 41, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him." From this it is inferred by Trinitarians, that the Evangelist here declares that the person whose glory Isaiah beheld in vision was Christ, and therefore that Christ is Jehovah. The inference, I grant, is in itself plausible enough. I acknowledge that I cannot absolutely confute it. I am not surprised, therefore, that those who on other grounds firmly believe that Christ *is* Jehovah, should be ready to draw this inference. But I positively deny, that we have here any clear, independent, decisive evidence to this effect, from the Evangelist John. There are many circumstances which render this inference exceedingly doubtful. It is by no means certain that we have, in our common version, the correct reading of this passage. Some excellent ancient versions and manuscripts read, "the glory of God," or, "the glory of his God," instead of simply "his glory." If this be the true reading, which is not improbable, there is of course no ground for supposing any allusion to Christ. But even with our present common reading, it is by no means certain that "*his* glory" means the glory of Christ. The name of Christ is not mentioned in the verses immediately preceding. The strict grammatical reference of the pronoun "his," would be to the word "Lord," occurring twice in the 38th verse, and which undoubtedly means Jehovah. But lastly, even if the Evangelist does mean the glory of Christ, it does not follow, with any certainty, that he means to affirm that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, when he saw the glory of Jehovah in vision. The Evangelist quotes *two* passages from the prophecy of Isaiah, the first of which is from the 53d Chapter; where the prophet is unquestionably foretelling the future glory of Christ. The Evangelist may allude entirely to this passage; or he may only mean, in a general way, that Isaiah foresaw and foretold the glory of the future Messiah. On all these grounds, I deny that there is here any clear and decisive evidence that Christ is Jehovah. The passage is altogether doubtful and ambiguous. This is all that I need contend for. And here, pardon me if I offer you a word of advice. When you hear any person insisting, that it is utterly impossible to understand a certain passage of Scripture in any sense different from that which he himself puts upon it, and yet you know that it has in fact long been differently understood by other persons, be cautious how you give implicit credence to such confident declarations. It is surely probable that they who make them are mistaken. If you see, indeed, that they are undoubtedly

right; then believe them; but do not rely entirely on their vehement assertions.

I have time only to examine one other passage of Scripture, and that very briefly for the present. It shall be the 1st Chapter and 1st v. of the Gospel according to John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This is said to be a passage which Unitarians have never been able to make anything of. I am far from thinking that it is so. I am ready to admit, indeed, that the interpretation of this passage which I myself adopt, as a Unitarian, is not entirely free from difficulties. But then I contend that this is the case with all interpretations which have ever been proposed; and of all, the common Trinitarian interpretation seems to me to be attended with the most formidable and insurmountable difficulties. I can discover in it no meaning whatever. Let us see. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." By the Word, Trinitarians understand the Son, the second person of the Godhead. What do they understand by the term *God*, in the instances in which it here occurs? There are, I apprehend, two different senses which Trinitarians commonly assign to this term, *God*. Sometimes they understand by it, the Father, the person denominated the Father, which I believe it always means in the Scriptures. Sometimes, however, they understand by it, the Trinity, the whole Godhead, as they say, including the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Now, I say, let the Trinitarian understand the term *God*, in this passage, in either of these senses, or, if he will, first in one sense and then in the other, and still I contend that his interpretation is surrounded with great and unavoidable difficulties. First, suppose the term *God* here means the Father; then it will be, "In the beginning was the Word, (that is, God the Son,) and God the Son was with God the Father, and God the Son *was* God the Father." This, according to their own system, is downright heresy. This is confounding the Persons, which we are forbidden to do under pain of everlasting damnation. But secondly, suppose we take the term *God* in the other Trinitarian sense, as including the three divine persons. Then the passage will read thus, "In the beginning was the word, (that is, God the Son,) and God the Son was with God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, and God the Son *was* God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Ghost." This indeed is confusion worse confounded. If the former interpretation makes the passage teach heresy, this makes it teach absurdity. No man has any fair right to tell me that, in these observations, I am employing my reason on an inscrutable mystery of religion. To my serious convictions, the doctrine of the Trinity is not a mystery of true religion, but altogether a human invention. I am simply employing my reason to ascertain what is, or rather what is not, the true sense

and teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Let us however suppose, as a last resort, that the Trinitarian here understands by the term *God*, either a divine person, a divine being, or, deity in the abstract, apart from any particular divine person. This is the only method of deriving any sense from the passage on the Trinitarian hypothesis. But I say it is a most desperate method. What authority can be adduced from the Scriptures for understanding the term *God* in this sense? Impossible! It is a sense which directly implies the existence of a plurality of Gods; just as we use the word *man* to signify humanity in the abstract, or human beings in general, or some particular man, which we could not do if there were not a plurality of men in existence. Such an application of the term *God* was common enough, and proper enough, amongst the heathen, who were polytheists. It is entirely unknown to the Scriptures, and opposed to the very genius of true and revealed religion.

How then do I myself understand this passage? I understand, that by the "Word" is not meant Jesus Christ personally, or any other real and distinct person, but the operating power and wisdom of God personified, that is to say, God himself, even Jehovah, the Father, the only true God. I believe that this phraseology, employed in this sense, was common in the time of the Evangelist John. The "Word" signifies those attributes of God which are manifested in his works and ways, and especially in the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. By the "Word," in this sense, all "things were made;" and at length it "became flesh," or dwelt in and was manifested through the *man* Christ Jesus. We read, in other parts of Scripture, that the Father "dwelt in Jesus," and "was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." This is my faith. This is the true Unitarian doctrine. I believe that the Father, the only true God, dwelt in Jesus Christ, intimately, spiritually, mysteriously, if you will; for I do not assume to comprehend the height and depth of that holy, ineffable union, which existed between the Father of spirits and the illuminated, sanctified soul, of the man Christ Jesus!

I must now conclude. In the next Lecture, if God spare me health and strength, I will enter upon the consideration of other passages, which have been recently produced in support of the proper deity of Christ. Let me entreat you, in the mean time, to consider the subject seriously. I do not aim or expect to make any immediate converts. I do not expect any man, simply upon what he hears from me, to abandon his old religious convictions and embrace mine. All I wish or hope for, at present, is to promote a spirit of free enquiry. To this end, I wish to convince you, that we Unitarians are not altogether such miserable reasoners, or such reckless despisers of the word of God, as we are sometime represented. We do endeavour to understand the Scriptures, and to build our religious faith on the foundation of their teaching.

Now, my brethren, let us receive and follow the excellent advice, which was given us where we were lately assembled together. Let us all pray for one another's salvation, and contend for that which we believe to be truth in a spirit of love and kindness. Knowledge is good; truth is precious; but charity is a divine and heavenly grace.

LECTURE SECOND.

MATTHEW, c. 19, v. 16, 17.

“AND BEHOLD, ONE CAME AND SAID UNTO HIM, GOOD MASTER, WHAT GOOD THING SHALL I DO, THAT I MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD? THERE IS NONE GOOD BUT ONE, THAT IS, GOD.”

NEITHER in this place, my brethren, nor in any other passage of Scripture, do I suppose that our Lord Jesus Christ ever meant to *declare*, to give *information* to his hearers, that he himself was not the one Almighty and Everlasting God. With my views of his nature, I cannot suppose that, in the whole course of his ministry, he ever once thought it necessary to make such a declaration, for such a purpose. His hearers did not require to be informed of so unquestionable a truth. I am persuaded, that the very thought of claiming equality of nature with the Infinite and Unchangeable Jehovah, never entered his mind; and as such a claim would also have appeared to every soul amongst the Jewish people absurd and impious, there never could have been any occasion that our Saviour should expressly disavow it. If Trinitarians suppose, therefore, that such is the nature of our argument from this and similar passages of Scripture, they are greatly mistaken. Indeed, I do not rest my Unitarian faith on this, or any other isolated text of Scripture. I rest my faith on the broad, strong foundations, that there is but one God, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is God, and that all the arguments produced to overthrow this simple doctrine, by proving that Jesus Christ himself is God, are totally irrelevant or inconclusive. On these plain grounds I build my Unitarian faith, and not exclusively, or chiefly, on the meaning of particular texts. Nevertheless, I do believe, even after all the ingenious pleading which I have lately heard to the contrary, that although it was not meant to be expressly *taught*, yet that it is clearly and reasonably *implied* in these words, that Jesus Christ

himself is not God. In reading this passage to you, my brethren, I have taken the liberty to place the emphasis chiefly, but not altogether, on the word *me*: "Why callest thou *me* good?" I hope that in doing so I have not offended either your ears or your hearts. We have been lately told, indeed, that this is wrong. We have been told, that Unitarians always lay the emphasis on the wrong word, in reading this passage. Who says so? Does not the right or wrong of the emphasis depend entirely on the sense in which you understand the words? Who, then, shall tell me, that I ought not to emphasize the word *me*, and that I ought to emphasize some other word in the sentence, unless he can teach me infallibly what is the true meaning of the sentence, and unless he has authority to bring my judgment on this point into subjection to his own? It may be very pleasant, to turn aside from a dull theological argument, to proffer one's opponent a little gratuitous instruction in elocution. But I entreat you to remember, my brethren, that this is not argument.

You must be aware, that there is sometimes much more implied in a person's words, than is absolutely expressed; and frequently it is implied, not expressed, because of the very certainty of its being understood. If I promise to meet a friend at a certain hour to-morrow, all that I express is my intention of then meeting him. But it is implied in this promise, that I expect to be alive to-morrow, to enjoy my usual health, and to retain the blessing of memory. Not a syllable of this required to be expressed, because from the nature of the promise it was sure to be instantly understood. In the same manner, then, I apprehend that when our Saviour said to this Jew, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God," although he did not mean to declare, and for the reasons which I have before stated could never have thought of declaring, that he himself was not God, yet that this meaning was naturally and clearly implied in his words.

Trinitarians allege, however, that our argument against the deity of Christ from this passage would be sound, if the man who addressed Jesus had believed that he was God. But, say they, this was by no means the case. He was an unconverted Jew. He did not know that Christ was God. He looked upon him only as a creature. Therefore, however proper it might be in itself to address Christ as the Supremely Good, yet it was wrong in this man, on account of his want of faith. Now this is surely a very bold evasion. Not to insist, that it is an entirely gratuitous assumption, it must surely appear very strange that our Lord, in his reply, did not utter one word to disabuse this man of his error, but rather employed language which, to speak in the mildest terms, was not ill adapted to confirm him in his awful ignorance. Is it consistent with the wisdom and compassion of our Saviour, to suppose that, when there was such an opportunity of teaching one of the most essential truths of his Gospel, he would not only entirely pass it

by, but even speak in a manner calculated to establish and perpetuate the error of the man with whom he was conversing? I cannot think this probable, scarcely possible. I cannot think thus of my Saviour without necessity; nor do I envy those who feel themselves to be under such a necessity. When I am referred, for a parallel passage, to the place where our Saviour says to the Pharisees, (Matthew, 22 Ch. 42 v.) "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" I do not think that I am referred to a strictly parallel passage; because our Saviour does not there go on to say that another person, not himself, was David's Son, as he does here appear to declare that, not himself, but another person, even God, is alone Supremely Good. After the fullest consideration of all to which I have recently listened, therefore, I do still believe that our Saviour here meant, not indeed to teach, (for there was in those times no occasion to teach so undeniable a truth,) but fully to imply, that he himself is not the one infinite and everlasting God.

Let us now proceed with our general argument. The Trinitarian proposes to discuss with me this question, Whether our Lord Jesus Christ be himself truly and properly God? Suffer me to recall to your minds the form in which we have agreed to put the argument, and the stage of it to which we have already advanced. We set out with the admission, that there is but one God. This we agree to consider as, in the language of mathematicians, a postulate, an axiom, a first principle not to be questioned. And, amidst our diversities of opinion on points which, I fear, we but very imperfectly comprehend, let us consider what a precious truth we here have for our common inheritance as Christians. "To us there is but one God!" What a sublime work did the inspired messengers of heaven perform, when they gave this great and fruitful principle of religious truth a firm establishment upon the earth!—when, in the midst of the grossest polytheism and superstition, they pointed the attention of men upwards to the throne of the One Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Father of all intelligent creatures, and cried aloud to the idolatrous nations of the world, "The Lord our God is One, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul!" How dearly ought we to prize this truth, my brethren, how jealously should we preserve it from corruption! Let us hope that we shall not find it necessary to leave the smallest cloud, not even the shadow of a shade, to obscure its glorious brightness.

But what is the next stage in our argument? I was called upon, as a Unitarian, to prove that the *Father* is God. I gladly undertook the task; and I brought under your notice a great number and variety of passages of Scripture, in which the person denominated the Father is plainly and expressly recognised as God. I shewed you that this is the peculiar and

hallowed name of God, under the Christian dispensation. This is the name by which the true God is almost uniformly addressed by our Saviour himself, as the Object of *his* devout trust, worship, and obedience. This name of God was evidently associated in the mind of Jesus, as it may and should be in our minds, not with the notion of any personal distinction in the godhead, but with the affections of filial reverence, gratitude and love, towards an Almighty and All-merciful Parent, Preserver, and Benefactor.

I advanced even beyond this in my argument. I brought under your notice several passages of scripture, where the *Father* is expressly mentioned by name, and where the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is also mentioned as a distinct person from the Father, and yet in those very passages the Father is solemnly declared to be "the only true God," the God whom alone we Christians are to acknowledge and worship.

Well, then, having done all this, have I not proved that the Father *alone* is God, and therefore that his Son Jesus Christ is not God? I am answered, No; All this is nothing to the purpose. Why not? How can this be? Because, I am told, there remain other passages of Scripture, in which the titles, attributes, and works of Deity, are ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ; and from these passages we must infer that he likewise is truly God. I will not shrink from the consideration of these passages. I will proceed with the task allotted to me. But observe; I enter upon this branch of the discussion under protest. I protest against its being considered absolutely necessary, in order to the establishment of my own simple faith in the unity of God. It is necessary only to disentangle this great truth from the subtilties and obscurities in which it has been involved by Trinitarian systems of theology. I contend that, it having been clearly demonstrated that there is but one God, and that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is God, it thereupon becomes my duty and yours, either to interpret all parts of Scripture, especially all ambiguous passages, in a sense consistent with these great truths already established, or even to acknowledge, if that should be found necessary, that there are some few passages which we cannot at present clearly and fully understand. This, I maintain, is the only safe and rational method of interpreting the Scriptures. And permit me, my brethren, before I go on with the argument, to pause here and contemplate for a moment the simplicity and beauty of the true Christian faith, as far as we have hitherto proceeded. "One God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." How plain, how reasonable, how harmonious within itself, how satisfying to every humble believer's mind and heart. One divine intelligence! One God of infinite and everlasting perfection! The mind of man is lifted up, by the influences of such a faith, to the region of sublime thoughts and holy aspirations! We feel that it is enough. The heart

naturally yearns for this, but it will contain no more. We are conscious that either to add to, or to take away from, this belief, would be a serious injury to us as moral and religious creatures. To veil and darken it, is to put out the very light of our souls. Farewell, then, for a time, beautiful and glorious Religion ! I am constrained, in your defence, to plunge into a labyrinth of human fancies concerning three persons in one God ; but I trust that my soul is not about to be weaned from you for ever, that I shall return to you again, after traversing these gloomy paths of error, with unshaken fidelity and unabated love, again to rejoice my heart with the contemplation of your divine simplicity !

I proceed now to examine other passages of Scripture, which the Trinitarian contends warrant the inference that the Son also is God. But before I do this, I wish to be indulged with a word or two of explanation, respecting what I said, in the former Lecture, on the first verses of John's Gospel. I am told that I did not fully develope my views of this important passage. I can easily believe this. I have no doubt, that if these Lectures should be replied to, this will be one of the principal points of attack. Be it so. Let it be attacked, and I will then defend it more at large. This is not the first, nor the second, nor the tenth time, that I have carefully considered the Trinitarian and Unitarian interpretations of this passage ; and I am well persuaded, that the latter interpretation, as against the former, is capable of a satisfactory defence. Nor have I any fear, that I shall be able to defend it after it has been attacked, even better than now ; at least with a better chance of satisfying my hearers. They will then see, and I myself shall see, what are the chief objections to which the Unitarian interpretation is thought to be exposed.

The next controverted passage to which I call your attention, is in the 9th. chap. and 5th v. of the Epistle to the Romans. We must read the preceding verse. The Apostle is speaking of the Jews, his own kinsmen according to the flesh : " Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Here, according to our common version, Christ appears to be denominated " God over all blessed for ever." No doubt, if it were certain that the Apostle meant to apply this expression to Christ, it would be one of the strongest arguments for his proper deity. I will first state to you, frankly, what is the Unitarian answer to this argument ; trusting to you, as I am sure I may, to wait for my reasons before you pronounce judgment. We propose, then, simply to alter the punctuation of this passage, and to take the latter words as a separate sentence, so as to make them apply, not to Christ, but to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

to Him who is known, on other grounds, to be God over all blessed for ever. In this way, the verse will read thus: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." Here we would place a period, or at least a colon. The remaining words may then be taken separately, either as a doxology, and translated thus, "God, who is over all, be blessed for ever, Amen;"—or otherwise, (which method seems to me preferable,) they may be taken as a simple assertion, and translated thus: "He who was over all," (that is, the Author of all those blessings and privileges of the Israelites, which had just been mentioned,) "was God, blessed for ever." Now, I can imagine some persons ready to say; "This indeed is a strange liberty you are taking with the Scriptures! What right have you thus to alter the punctuation, and to break up one sentence into two?" I answer, with all deference, that we have precisely the same right to do this, as Trinitarians have to maintain the existing punctuation and method of reading the passage. Every intelligent man knows, that our present punctuation of the Scriptures is not the work of the original, inspired writers. The most ancient manuscripts have no punctuation, nor even any space between the words. All this, therefore, is entirely the work of uninspired Editors and Translators. I would remark, that the manner in which we propose to read this passage, has the sanction of such great scholars as Erasmus, Grotius, Wetstein, Le Clerc, and others. You will perhaps hear it said, that such a proposal betrays a gross ignorance of the Greek language; that it is wholly irreconcilable with the grammatical structure of the passage. I have already often considered these objections; and I now beg leave to say, in anticipation of their being repeated, that I am firmly persuaded of their being untenable. At all events, this is the true point of the controversy concerning the passage,—Whether it must necessarily apply to Christ? and therefore allow me to ask you what fair object any man can have, in completely passing over this point, and proceeding merely to shew that there are no less than four distinct attributes of deity here mentioned? What is all this to the purpose? Yet this is what we have lately heard. But then it was further argued, that the Apostle must here intend to speak of the deity of Christ, or there would be no meaning in his words, when he says that Christ came of the Israelites "*as concerning the flesh.*" We were told, that he must have intended to contrast the human nature of Christ with his divine nature. Now, my brethren, do look back only to the 3rd verse of this same Chapter, where the Apostle uses the very same words respecting himself, "My kinsmen according to the flesh;" in the original, the very same words as occur in the 5th verse. Whatever the Apostle meant here respecting himself, he may surely mean the same thing in the 5th verse respecting Christ. He doubtless means, both concerning himself and his heavenly

Master, that although they were Israelites by *natural birth*, they were greatly superior to them in *spiritual privileges*; Jesus in the very highest degree, as the chosen Son of God, and the Apostle in an inferior degree, as his faithful and inspired servant.

The next passage which I shall examine, is in the 1st Ch. and 8th v. of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." I would first observe, that there is no evidence in the original that this should be considered as a direct address to the Son. It seems so, indeed, in our version; but the word *προς*, translated "unto," properly signifies, "concerning," "with respect to," "in regard to." In the 7th verse, our translators themselves have rendered it "of," in the sense of "concerning:" "And of (*προς*;) the angels he saith," that is, "concerning the angels." We must understand the 8th verse, therefore, not as a direct address to the Son, but only as a quotation from the old Testament which the writer of this Epistle declares in some way *concerns* the Son. The passage is taken from the 45th Psalm, where it is commonly supposed, and I think rightly, to be applied to Solomon. The Psalm appears to have been written on occasion of the marriage of that king, with the daughter of the king of Egypt. If therefore our present translation of this passage were the only admissible translation, we must needs understand the word "God," here, in that inferior sense, in which you know it is sometimes employed in Scripture, when applied to Princes, Rulers, and Judges. I may mention, that a learned Bishop of the Church of Ireland, (Dr. Young,) in his translation of this Psalm, renders the verse, "Thy throne, *O Prince*, is for ever and ever." But I am inclined to believe, that the proper translation of the passage may be, "God is thy throne for ever and ever;" that is to say, God is the founder, the supporter, the protector of thy dominion; as David calls God his rock, his tower, his shield, and his defence. You may perhaps again hear it said, that this proposed reading betrays a total ignorance of the construction of the Greek language. I believe, however, that here again such an objection is untenable. I may refer to the 26th v. of 72nd Psalm in the Septuagint (in our version it is the 73rd Psalm) for a precisely similar construction, and the meaning there undoubtly is, "God is my portion for ever." Let us consider, then, how the matter stands. We have here an ambiguous passage of Scripture, which may be fairly translated either way, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" or, "God is thy throne for ever and ever." How shall we determine which is right? We look further into the passage; and we find that the person spoken of is a creature, one whom God hath "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows" because he "loved righteousness

and hated iniquity." Ought not this to determine us instantly towards that translation, or that understanding of the passage, which makes it applicable to a creature? But the Trinitarian says, No. It is plain, indeed, that this person is a creature; but still, he says, we must understand this ambiguous passage in the sense which makes it applicable only to the most High God, and then we must infer that the person spoken of had two natures, the human and the divine! Now, I ask you confidently, if any other subject of human knowledge is ever treated in this manner? if any other Book but the Bible was ever interpreted in this manner? and if it were, whether we should not make absurdity and contradiction appear in almost every page?

In the further prosecution of the argument, I am assured that *eternal existence* is ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, and that therefore he must be God. For proof of this, I am referred to the 5th c. and 2nd v. of the Prophet Micah:—"But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Allowing, though without conclusive evidence, that this relates to Christ, yet how does it prove his eternal existence? Perhaps it may be thought that there is some mysterious signification in the expression "goings forth." I believe there is not. The expression signifies properly natural *origin* or *descent*. It is substantially the same expression as had been used in the former part of the verse, when saying that this person should "*come forth* out of Bethlehem." As to the term "*everlasting*," every one who has carefully read the Scriptures knows with what latitude it is used. It often means nothing more than very ancient, or very durable. This passage, therefore, if it relate at all to the Messiah, may signify only that his birth should be from a long and remote line of ancestors, as David and Abraham; or that his appearance, his coming into the world, had been decreed from of old. In this latter sense, I believe, Calvin has interpreted the passage.

I am next referred, for evidence of the eternity of Christ, to the expressions "Alpha and Omega", occurring in the Revelation of St. John. The first instance is in the 8th v. of the 1st Chap. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." In the present approved Edition of the Greek Testament, by Griesbach, the word "God" is inserted after the word "Lord,"—"saith the Lord God." There is no evidence whatever, that this was uttered by Christ. He has not been represented as speaking in the preceding verses. The sentence appears to be introduced abruptly, in imitation, I imagine, of the prophet Isaiah. It doubtless relates to Jehovah, who is known to be the Lord God Almighty.

The second instance occurs in the 11th verse of the same Chapter, "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Here these words are undoubtedly spurious, and are rejected as such from the text of Griesbach. The only other instance is in the 13th v. of the 22nd Chap. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Here again, there is no evidence whatever that these words are uttered by Christ. The last speaker, in the preceding verses, is the Angel whom John would have worshipped, but he refused to be worshipped. Christ does not begin to speak until the sixteenth verse. The expressions are evidently introduced here, as they are in the beginning of the book, abruptly, and relate to Jehovah the Lord God Almighty. Neither do I think it can be shewn, that, even when applied to God, these expressions are meant to declare His *eternity*. They would seem to be very unsuitable expressions for such a purpose. Alpha and Omega are the names of the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet; but in eternity there is no first or last, no beginning or ending. I apprehend that the expressions are used to signify that God is the Author and Finisher of the series of events alluded to in the Prophecy. I am very well aware, that our Lord Jesus Christ, though he is not called Alpha and Omega, is called the first and the last, several times in this book; and such he evidently was, as being under God the originator, conductor, and finisher of all things relating to human salvation, and to the affairs of the Christian Church. The manner in which he is mentioned, where he is called the first and the last, shews plainly that he cannot be God; for it is said "I am he that liveth and was *dead*."

Next I am assured that Christ must be God, because the divine attribute of *omnipresence* is ascribed to him in the Scriptures. For proof of this, I am referred to the 18th Chap. and 20th v. of the Gospel according to Mathew: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If you examine the context, you will see that these words are addressed, not to the disciples of Christ in general, at all times and in all places, but to the twelve Apostles in their peculiar apostolic capacity. Read the two preceding verses: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." This has never been supposed to apply to Christian disciples in general. It evidently relates to the Apostles exclusively. They alone had authority to bind or loose on earth. Surely then, it is reasonable to understand the promise in the 20th verse as having the same special and confined reference. Whenever two or three of the Apostles should be assembled to deliberate and consult together, respecting any important

matters connected with their divine apostolic mission, Christ would be with them, to afford them all needful guidance and assistance. We know that he did exercise a personal, miraculous superintendence over the affairs of his Church during that age. You have no right to assume that, in order to the fulfilment of such a promise, it was necessary for Christ to be omnipresent, or even to be personally present in two places at the same time. We have been told, however, that this was the very same promise which had been given by Jehovah to the Jewish Church, as related in the 20th Ch. and 24th v. of Exodus, "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." I can perceive no very exact parallel between these two promises. But if it were so, the circumstance would appear to me to be very unfavourable to the Trinitarian interpretation. It is plain, that the promise in Exodus cannot relate to the real omnipresence of Jehovah; because it is said, "I will *come* unto thee in all places where I record my name," a mode of expression which cannot apply to the real omnipresence of God, for in this respect he *is* at all times in all places. It must refer, therefore, to the manifestation of his favour, his supporting and consoling influence, to the minds of all his sincere worshippers. In the same sense we may understand the promise of Christ to his faithful Apostles, during their arduous trials and labours for the conversion of the world. I have no doubt that he had power to afford them such support: but this will not necessarily imply his omnipresence. You see that the difference between what the Scriptures declare, and what the Trinitarian infers, is no less than the difference between Finite and Infinite.

Next, I am told that the attribute of *omnipotence* is ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures. In regard to the passage in the beginning of John's Gospel, where it is said of the "Word," that "all things were made by him," I have already given you my reasons for believing that the "Word" does not mean Jesus Christ, but the operating power and wisdom of God. But I am referred, in proof that this divine attribute belongs to Christ, to the 21st. v. of the 3d chap. of the Epistle to the Phillippians, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." It is first to be observed here, that the expression "all things," must frequently be understood in a very limited sense in the Scriptures. The apostle John, for instance, (1st Epistle 2nd Chap. 20 v.), says to the Christian believers, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" that is, all things relating to the truths of the Gospel, all things necessary to salvation. There is a similar limitation in the

meaning of this phrase in many other passages :—its sense, in fact, must always be determined by its connection. We may understand therefore, in this place, simply that Christ is able to subdue all obstacles in the way of accomplishing the great work assigned to him by God, to raise the dead, and change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. This power he may have entrusted to him by God, without being himself omnipotent. Indeed it is clear to me, that when a Trinitarian argues from this passage for the natural omnipotence of Christ, he argues against his own acknowledged principles. All Trinitarians profess to believe, that in his mediatorial work and office, Christ acts altogether in subordination to the will and authority of the Father. But is not the act of raising the dead, and conducting his faithful followers to immortal blessedness,—is not this a part of his mediatorial work and office? And here let me take notice of an observation which we have all lately heard. We have been told that the mere appointment to an office does not necessarily give the power and qualifications required for the execution of it. Certainly not. But what does this prove? What do you mean by this observation, unless you mean to insinuate that God, who gave this appointment to Christ, could not at the same time endow him with the necessary powers and qualifications for the discharge of it. I am sure that you have no just grounds for insinuating such a doubt. If I, as a Unitarian, were to talk thus, I should lay myself open to your severest rebukes. Be it remembered, that there is no dispute between us, whether our Saviour was or was not possessed of extraordinary, superhuman, miraculous, divine power, knowledge, wisdom and authority. We all cheerfully admit that he had these qualities. The only question is, How was he possessed of them? Were they the inherent perfections of his own divine nature? or had they been bestowed on him by the Father, to fit him for the discharge of his heavenly office as the appointed Saviour of the world? I firmly believe the latter, on the solemn declaration of Christ himself, that all power had been *given* unto him, and that he spake and acted always by the will and commandment of the Father.

Next, we are assured, that Christ must be God, because the divine work of *creation* is ascribed to him in the Scriptures. I will now examine what I understand to be the strongest passage in support of this assertion. It is in the 16th v. of the 1st chap. of the Epistle to the Colossians: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.” Here again, I will first state plainly the interpretation which I mean to advocate, relying on your candour to wait for my reasons, before you pronounce judgment against me. I maintain, then, that this language may and should be

understood, in perfect conformity with the use of similar phraseology in the Scriptures, not of proper material creation, but of that new *moral* creation, the moral and spiritual regeneration of the world, effected by Christ through the influence of his Gospel. In the first place, there can be no doubt that the words *creation*, and to *create*, are often used in the Scriptures in this moral sense, especially to describe the effects of the Gospel. In the 19th v. of the 59th chap. of Isaiah, Jehovah is represented as saying, "I *create* the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near." In this instance, the work described as a *creation* is of precisely the same kind, as that which is wrought upon all men by sincere faith in Jesus Christ. The very same expressions, indeed, are applied by the Apostle Paul (Ephesians chap. 2. v. 17.) to the regenerated condition of the Jewish and Gentile believers, "Peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Another passage in Isaiah (chap. 65, v. 17 and 18), is even more favourable to my purpose. Speaking, as most Christians believe, of the future age and dispensation of the Gospel, Jehovah declares, "Behold, I *create* new Heavens and a new Earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I *create*"; or rather, as it is rendered by Bishop Lowth, "Ye shall rejoice and exult in the age to come which I *create*." Here, then, in the words of Prophecy, we have a Scriptural key for the interpretation of all those passages, in which *creation* may seem to be ascribed to our Saviour. Accordingly we find that, in the New Testament also, this phraseology is used, where it is impossible not to understand it in a figurative and moral sense. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says, (Chap. 2. v. 10.) "We are his workmanship created in, (or by) Christ Jesus unto good works." Further on in the same Epistle, (Chap. 4. v. 23 and 24), he writes thus, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness". In his 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, (Chap. 5. v. 17.) he also says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." There is no mistaking these passages. Men are here undoubtedly said to be *created* by Jesus Christ. But the allusion is evidently, not to their original, proper creation, but to the moral regeneration of their hearts and characters. No candid adversary, therefore, can object to our method of interpreting the passage in question, that it is contrary to the use of such phraseology in the Scriptures. We are surely bound to adopt this interpretation, in this particular place, unless it can be shewn that there is something in the passage itself which renders it absurd to do so. I can perceive nothing of the kind. The whole context relates to the moral influences and blessings of the Gospel. Immediately before, we are said to have "redemption through the blood of Christ, forgiveness of sins."—

Immediately after, he is declared to be "the head," not of the universe, but "of the Church, the first born from the dead". Neither can I see anything in the 16th verse, by itself considered, which should lead us to a different conclusion. With regard to the expression "all things", I have already shewn you that it must often be understood in a limited sense, and must have its meaning determined by the context. With regard to the expressions "heaven and earth," we have already seen, from the passage in Isaiah, that they may be used in reference simply to a moral regeneration. But then we have been recently asked, as though it were a decisive objection to the Unitarian interpretation of this passage, whether we do not know that the "things in heaven," (by which it is assumed are meant the angels,) never sinned, never fell, and therefore never could need to be regenerated by Christ? Now, my brethren, do trust to your Bibles, and not to the confident tone in which any man can put a question. Do look forward only to the 19th and 20th verses of this same Chapter, and you will see that, whatever be meant by the expression, the "things in heaven," as well as the "things in earth," certainly did stand in need of regeneration and reconciliation by Christ: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell: And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Again, in the 9th and 10th verses of the 1st Ch. of the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have similar language: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." Now, I am not bound, any more than the Trinitarian, to shew precisely what is meant by "things in heaven;" but you see that, whatever is meant, the things in heaven as well as things on earth did require to be created anew, or regenerated by Christ.

Next, we are assured that Christ must be God because he is represented in the Scriptures as the proper object of *worship*. I take leave to object to this, that it cannot be safely raised into an independent argument, because the term "worship" is employed with so much latitude in the Scriptures, that we can in no case infer the nature of a person from the simple circumstance of his being said to be worshipped; but must in all cases judge of the kind of worship intended, from what we know, on other grounds, of the nature and dignity of the person. You are aware, that formerly the term "worship" was employed in our own language with much greater freedom than at present. You know that, in the Marriage Service of the Church of England, the husband promises to worship the wife; that is, to pay her all due respect. There is a similar latitude in the meaning and application of the verb *προσκυνεω*, which in

in the Scriptures is translated "worship." It is often used in reference to homage paid to human beings; to other human beings as well as to Jesus Christ. Indeed, no one supposes, not even Trinitarians, that most of the worship which is said to have been rendered to Christ whilst on earth, was proper *divine* worship, rendered to him as God. When we are told (Matthew 8th c. 2nd v.) that a "leper came and worshipped him;" and again, (in the 9th c. and 18th v.) that "there came a certain ruler and worshipped him;" no one can reasonably imagine, that these persons considered the being who stood visibly before them, clothed in flesh and blood, to be the infinite and immutable God, and that they worshipped him as such! They only meant to pay him, according to Eastern customs, that kind and degree of *obeisance*, to which they thought him entitled as a great and venerable person. We read, in the parable of the king who took account of his servants, (Matthew 18th c. 26th v.) that "the servant fell down and worshipped his lord, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all."

In proof of the great latitude with which the term "worship" is employed in the Scriptures, I may refer you to the 29th c. and 20th v. of the 1st Book of Chronicles, where the whole congregation of Israel are represented as bowing down their heads, and *worshipping* at the same time the Lord Jehovah and king David, but of course in different senses, with different kinds of homage, worshipping the one as God, the other as king merely: "And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king."

You perceive, therefore, that worship, as the term is employed in the Scriptures, may be given to others besides God; and therefore you cannot justly infer, from its being said that Christ was worshipped, that he is truly and properly God, unless you can clearly prove, from some other circumstances, that the worship offered to him, and accepted by him, was proper *divine* worship, the worshipping of him as God. All the instances advanced in proof of this, appear to me utterly to fail. It is said, for example, (Hebrews 1st c. 6 v.) that when he was brought into the world, "all the angels of God were commanded to worship him." But this will not establish, nor help at all to establish, the doctrine of his proper deity, unless you can prove that it was *as God* the angels were commanded to worship him; of which there is no evidence in the passage itself, nor in any other part of the Scriptures. I believe, that the angels were instructed to do only that, which I myself am most desirous of doing, to pay to Christ all due homage and reverence as the best beloved Son of God, and the appointed Saviour of the world. We are also referred to the example of Stephen, (recorded in Acts, 7th c. 59th and 60th vs.) who is represented, in his dying moments, as calling upon Christ and

saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It is here to be observed, that Stephen at this moment beheld Jesus, (v. 56) as a manifest *object of his senses*, as the "Son of man, standing on the right hand of God." It should seem to be impossible, therefore, that he could, in these circumstances, have regarded Jesus as God, and have worshipped him as such. He doubtless considered him as his beloved Lord and Master, who had been crucified and raised from the dead; and, actually beholding him, committed his dying spirit into his hands, as any other disciple might do, *in like circumstances*, without meaning for a moment to worship him as God. Proper divine worship, is the worship of a Spiritual and therefore Invisible Being. It is also to be remarked, that there is no proof that the last words uttered by Stephen, (v. 60,) "Lord lay not this sin to their charge," were addressed to Jesus Christ. We read, at the beginning of this verse, that the dying Martyr now "kneeled down," (he had therefore hitherto been standing, a posture in which, I apprehend, no Jew would have offered solemn prayer to Jehovah,) but he now "kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." These last words, therefore, were probably addressed to Jehovah, the only true God, and not to Jesus Christ. If we, my brethren, should ever be favoured with a visible manifestation of the presence of Jesus, as Stephen was, we may then offer an urgent request to him, without thereby intending to offer him proper divine worship. As circumstances are, the example of Jesus himself, in his dying moments, is much more suitable for our imitation, than the example of Stephen. Our Saviour was situated as we are, having the invisible God alone for the object of his trust, and he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

I have no doubt, that during the apostolic age, the Apostles and other disciples of Christ sometimes presented their requests to him. This they might do without at all regarding him as God, or meaning to worship him with supreme divine worship. They knew that, in that age, he was personally and miraculously engaged in watching over and conducting the affairs of his Spiritual Church. If any believe, that the relation between Christ and his disciples is still such as to warrant these requests, I say not that it will be absolutely improper to offer them; but even this may be done without any necessary recognition of the proper deity of Christ. *Worship*, petition, entreaty,—as we have seen from many Scriptural examples,—may be offered to other persons besides God. *Divine worship*, the supreme homage of the soul, can be rightly offered to no one but to Him who is declared to be "the only true God," even the FATHER.

I apprehend that there is good evidence in support of the opinion, that during the earliest periods of the Christian Church our Saviour was not usually considered as the proper object of prayer, or divine worship. For proof of this, I will read you a passage from the writings of Origen, who lived in the third

century, and was then one of the greatest lights and ornaments of the Christian Church. He says, "If we understand what prayer is, it will appear that it is never to be offered to any originated being, *not to Christ himself*, but only to the God and Father of all, to whom our Saviour himself prayed and taught us to pray. For, when his disciples asked him, 'Teach us to pray,' he did not teach them to pray to himself, but to the Father. Conformably to what he said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good, except one, God, the Father," (you perceive, my brethren, that I have good and ancient authority for understanding my text, in this Lecture, as I have explained it) "how could he say otherwise than, 'Why dost thou pray to me? Prayer, as ye learn from the Holy Scriptures, is to be offered to the Father only, to whom I myself pray.' Let us then, attending to what was said by Jesus, and all having the same mind, pray to God through him, without any division respecting the mode of prayer. But are we not divided, if some pray to the Father and some to the Son? Those who pray to the Son, whether they do or do not pray to the Father also, fall into a gross error, in their great simplicity, through want of judgment and examination." *De Oratione, Opp. I. pp. 222-224.*

And now, my brethren, having examined so many passages of Scripture, permit me to ask you one plain and serious question. Is it true, as you and I have recently been told, that there is precisely the same kind of evidence for the proper deity of Christ, as for the deity of the Father? I say nothing of the disproportion, in point of *number*, between the passages in which the Father is clearly recognised as God, and those which, by the utmost ingenuity, will afford even inferential evidence for the deity of the Son. But I ask you, Is it true that there is precisely the same *kind* of evidence, equally direct, equally strong, equally explicit and indubitable? When I ask this question, I do not presume that you agree with me, in my understanding of all the controverted passages. I will suppose you still to adhere to the common interpretation of those passages. I will suppose you ready to answer me somewhat in this manner; 'Yes, all this is well enough, as far as it goes; I see that you have something, not altogether unreasonable, to say in favour of a different understanding of those passages; and this may be sufficient to satisfy you as a Unitarian; but for my own part, as a Trinitarian, I still think that the popular way of understanding the controverted texts is the right way, and I shall still abide by that application and that meaning of them to which my mind has always been accustomed.' Very well, my friends; be it so. But again I ask you to forget the vehement assertions which we have lately heard, and to say in the sincerity of your own minds, whether it is true that we have the very same kind of evidence, equally express and unambiguous, for the independent deity of Christ, as for the deity of the Father? Is *this* the kind of evidence, the best and the only kind of evidence,

on which we all rest our blissful conviction, that there is one God and Father of all, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? I am surprised to hear any man venture on such an extraordinary assertion. I say confidently, No. Praised be the name of God, even the Father, that he has not left us without far better witness of *his* existence, and his infinite perfections, and his all-merciful purposes towards men. Let me entreat you, my brethren, to look closely into the nature of this alledged evidence for the proper deity of Christ. You produce a passage, for example, from the prophecy of Isaiah, in which you think that Christ is clearly denominated "Mighty God," and "Everlasting Father." I shew you that, according to the use of the very same words in other parts of Scripture, and upon the testimony of learned men, Trinitarians as well as Unitarians, those expressions may be fairly understood to mean only that Christ, besides being "Wonderful, Counsellor, and Prince of Peace," was also to be a Mighty Ruler or Potentate, and the Author or Founder of an everlasting dispensation. Well then, if it be so, all your evidence vanishes here; at least, all certainty, all proof vanishes. You adduce, again, a passage in which Christ appears to be styled "God over all, blessed for ever." I shew you that, by simply altering the punctuation, which is entirely the work of uninspired men, the passage becomes applicable, not to Christ at all, but to his God and Father. Then, if it be so, here likewise all your evidence vanishes. You bring forward another passage, in which the Son appears to be directly addressed as God; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." I shew you that, by simply adopting a different translation, which no reasonable man can deny to be admissible, the sentiment becomes this: "God is thy throne for ever and ever," the founder and supporter of thy dominion, as David calls God his rock, and his shield. Here therefore again, your evidence vanishes, your proof is gone. You next appeal to passages in which you think the Eternity of Christ is declared, because he is called *Alpha* and *Omega*. I shew you that in one of those passages, the words so much relied on are spurious. I shew you that in the two passages in which they are genuine, we do not read that they were uttered by Jesus Christ. He is not the speaker in those places. They are spoken by the Lord God Almighty, who, I have a right to assume, till you prove the contrary, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because he is known, on other grounds, to be the Lord God Almighty. Here therefore again, all your evidence vanishes. And once more, you refer to a passage in which you think the work of proper *creation* is ascribed to Jesus Christ. I shew you that, when we look carefully into the meaning of similar phraseology in many other parts of Scripture, we find that all this may be fairly understood of the *moral* regeneration of the world, through the spiritual reign of Jesus Christ. Here therefore all your proof likewise vanishes. I might proceed in

the same manner to notice all the other passages which I have examined ; and, *a fortiori*, all those still more ambiguous passages which I have not examined. I demand again, Is this the best sort and the only sort of evidence, on which we believe there is one God even the Father ? I do not ask you to believe as I believe ; *that* is between God and your own consciences. But I do ask you to display a little charity and forbearance towards us, your fellow Christians, who feel ourselves constrained by a solemn regard to the great incontrovertible principles of the Gospel, and feel ourselves justified on grounds not only of reason but of Scripture, in receiving these passages in a different sense from that in which you have been taught to understand them. This, at all events, is the foundation of our Unitarian faith. It being certain, that there is but one God ; and it being certain that the Father is God, and it being certain that our Lord Jesus Christ is a distinct person from the Father, and the proposition that, nevertheless, our Lord Jesus Christ is himself God being apparently inconsistent with these great, settled principles of divine truth, and the evidence for this proposition being to our minds so insufficient,—these, I say, are the true foundations of our belief in the strict Unity, and Sole Deity, of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether these reasons shall appear satisfactory to you or not, you will henceforth know them ; and I trust you will always remember them, whenever you may hear us slandered as blind and conceited worshippers of our own reason. I demand on these grounds, (not indeed that our opinions should be embraced by a single mind that is not convinced of their truth, certainly not,)—but I demand on these grounds, in the name of justice and candour, that it shall be allowed that our reasons for our Unitarian faith are not utterly futile and ridiculous, and that our motives for embracing and holding fast by this faith, in the midst of so much unmerited obloquy, may not be utterly disreputable to us, as men and as Christians.

In conclusion let me offer one serious consideration to the thoughts of my Trinitarian brethren. Consider, my friends, how full, how ample and how explicit, the evidence *ought* to be, for such a doctrine as you require us to embrace. That there is one God, of Almighty power, of Infinite wisdom and goodness, “all nature cries aloud.” That the Maker and Father of all creatures is God, and that he is to be worshipped and obeyed, was known already to the Jews, and dimly recognised by the heathen. A simple, clear acknowledgment of this great principle of all true religion, might therefore have been a sufficient foundation whereon to build the glorious superstructure of Christianity. But, that the Son is likewise God, that the Holy Ghost is likewise God, that there are three divine persons, and yet but one God,—this, you must allow to be an entirely new truth, if it be a truth, which was first promulgated

and established by the Gospel. And, since the everlasting salvation of men is thought to depend on the belief of this mystery, we might surely expect to find it declared in Scripture in the fullest and most unambiguous manner. Is it not so? Consider what is the nature of your premises, and what the boldness and vastness of the conclusion which you venture to draw from them: Nothing less than that there are three persons who are each properly God, which wherein it differs from the belief of three Gods, you yourselves must determine; nothing less than that he who was born of a woman, and died on the cross, was the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. Ah! Trinitarians sometimes warn us of what they consider to be our daring and rashness, in the free interpretation of the Scriptures. I always listen to such warnings with perfect respect, whenever I see reason to believe that they proceed from men of sincere and pious hearts. But Trinitarians must bear with me in return, whilst I tell them solemnly, that no words can adequately express my astonishment at their conduct, when I see that they do not hesitate, on such grounds as I have now partly examined, to mar the divine simplicity of that Apostolic creed, that there is "one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

I am sorry, my Christian friends, to have detained you so long. It is my intention to deliver one more Lecture, in order to bring my own argument to a fair conclusion. In that Lecture I shall more directly give my own positive reasons for my Unitarian belief concerning the person of Christ. I shall, as it were, more immediately state my own case. Hitherto, as you must have observed, I have stood almost entirely on the defensive. Some of my friends think that I have done so too much; and perhaps they are right; but I suspect that, in forming this opinion, they consult their own feelings rather than the feelings of Trinitarians. My judgment dictates to me, that if I had not first shewn a disposition to examine the arguments of my opponent, I should have had no chance of obtaining an impartial hearing for my own arguments. But as I have done this, to the utmost extent which time and circumstances will allow, I do now respectfully claim of all, who wish to form an impartial estimate of the evidence on this important question, that they will give me their attendance at the next Lecture, when, as I have said, I shall more particularly enter upon the statement of my own positive reasons for believing that Christ is not God. This Lecture I shall deliver next Thursday evening. It has been represented to me, that by giving these Lectures only on Sunday evenings, I may be keeping away those who wish to hear both sides of the argument from their own places of worship, where they might be acquiring more general benefit. I have no wish to do so; I should be sorry to do so. I did not begin this controversy, nor provoke it. I have no wish to prolong it unnecessarily; but having been brought into it by

a sense of duty, I shall not shrink from continuing it to whatever extent either existing or future circumstances may seem to me to demand. On Thursday evening, therefore, I shall deliver my last Lecture for the present; and I shall then more especially give you my reasons for thinking, that we ought to interpret all the controverted passages of Scripture in a sense consistent with the exclusive deity of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LECTURE THIRD.

MARK, c. 12, v. 29, 30.

"AND JESUS ANSWERED HIM, THE FIRST OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS IS, HEAR O ISRAEL; THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD:

"AND THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND, AND WITH ALL THY STRENGTH: THIS IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT."

EVERY circumstance relating to this passage of Scripture serves to give it particular interest and value. The speaker is our Lord Jesus Christ himself. The question which had been put to him, by one of the Jewish Scribes, was of the very highest importance, "Which is the first commandment of all?" The manner and occasion of this enquiry were also of an especial kind; and the commendation which our Lord bestowed on the Scribe, when he saw that he fully understood and approved his doctrine, was such as cannot fail to fix our attention. "And when Jesus," observes the Evangelist, "saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God". All these circumstances, I say, help to give the passage more than ordinary solemnity and value. Let us therefore examine it closely. We read that our Lord had been reasoning with the Jews, first with the Pharisees, respecting the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar, and afterwards with the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection of the dead. "Then one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel, the Lord Our God is one Lord". I must here beg to make you acquainted with the opinion of some men learned in the Scriptures, that this part of our Lord's reply to the Scribe,

is not translated, in our common version, so correctly as it might have been. These words, you will remember, are taken from Moses, and are first recorded in the 6th Chap. and 4th v. of the Book of Deuteronomy. Therefore the word "*Lord*", here, is undoubtedly the representative, (which it is not always in the New Testament,) of the proper name *Jehovah*, the peculiar name of the God of Israel. On these grounds, it is thought that the passage should either be rendered as two distinct affirmations, in this way, "The Lord," that is Jehovah, "is our God, the Lord is one"; or else as a single affirmation, with an emphatic repetition of the principal term, in this way, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." This, which I believe, independently of all doctrinal considerations, to be the most correct method of rendering the passage, gives it a clear and important meaning, as a solemn declaration of the divine Unity. But our common version obscures this meaning, and indeed, if you reflect on it, very nearly deprives the passage of all meaning whatever. You can scarcely attach any sense to the words of Moses and of Christ, as they stand in the present translation, if you bear in mind that the term *Lord* is merely a substitute for the proper name *Jehovah*. To say, that Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, scarcely amounts to any sense. Proper names, from their nature and use, will not admit of plurality. Jehovah therefore, being the proper name of the God of the Jews, of course there could be but one Jehovah; and whether he consist of three personal distinctions, or be strictly one person, can make no difference in this case. His proper and exclusive name being Jehovah, it were a flat truism to say that he is one Jehovah. But to say, that Jehovah our God is One, meaning thereby to affirm that the true God is one and only one Being, (and surely, if such strange disputes had not arisen amongst Theologians, I might have said one and only one Person,)—this, you perceive, amounts to a very clear and a very important meaning. Apply these remarks to any other proper names, and you will instantly see the justness of them. What meaning would there be, for example, in saying that Jesus Christ is one Jesus Christ, or Julius Cæsar is one Julius Cæsar, or London is one London. There is barely any sense in such assertions. But to say that Jesus Christ is one, Julius Cæsar is one, and London is one, meaning thereby to affirm that each of the objects to which these proper names are given is strictly one, according to their respective natures, one person or one city, this imparts a clear and reasonable meaning to the assertions. On all these grounds, therefore, and in order to give a real, weighty sense, to the words of Moses and of Christ, it is thought that they should be rendered into English as I have explained; either, "The Lord is our God, the Lord is one;" or else, "The Lord our God, the Lord, is one." This translation has been adopted by many Trinitarians. I may refer to the learned and judicious Dr. Campbell, in his excellent work on the four Gospels, who stre-

nuously advocates, and as I think clearly establishes, the propriety of such a translation.

And here, my Christian friends, as I happen to be speaking of the translation of a passage of Scripture, allow me a few moments' digression on that subject. We have lately heard it asserted, that if a new translation of the Scriptures were now to be made, so far from there being any diminution of the apparent evidence for the deity of Christ, there would be a considerable addition made to that evidence. It does not become me, perhaps, to contradict this assertion; but I beg leave to say, with all due deference to the judgments of others, that I am decidedly of a different opinion. However, let me ask you to consider the circumstances of the case, and determine for yourselves which is most probable. You know that the Scriptures, both the original text and the translations, have been for many centuries almost exclusively in the hands of Trinitarian believers. Is it not most likely, therefore, that whatever mistakes or corruptions may have crept into these sacred writings, they will generally be found of such a character as to favour the popular prevailing belief? This you must see to be in itself most probable. Another circumstance also deserves attention. Trinitarian believers, and in this country especially, the Trinitarian Clergy of the Church of England, are the only persons who have the power and influence necessary to cause a new translation of the Scriptures to be made, so as that it may have the sanction of public authority and be received with confidence by the people. I believe there is no class of Christians who would rejoice more sincerely, than Unitarians, to see a great national work of this kind accomplished, in an able and faithful manner. I can truly say for myself, (and I am convinced that I express the feelings of the great majority of Unitarians,) that I exceedingly admire and venerate the common English version of the Scriptures. I suppose that there is no version in the world to be preferred to it, for general excellence; and I hold that, besides its faithfulness as a translation, it is, in point of English, one of the most glorious monuments that was ever raised to the honour of a fine language. I should be grieved to my heart, to see it superseded by any other version, which has ever fallen under my notice. I am persuaded, that Christians of all sects and parties would desire to see this version remain as it is, in respect to all its great leading qualities, only corrected in those instances where it is now known to be erroneous, from our present improved acquaintance with the original text of Scripture. We heretics challenge the highly educated Trinitarian Clergy of the Church of England, who alone have the power to cause this desirable work to be accomplished, to put forth a new translation. They themselves declare that if it were done, it would go far to annihilate our heresy, by more fully establishing the doctrine of the deity of Christ, which they say is a

doctrine necessary to salvation ;—and yet this work is not accomplished, nor a single step taken to advance it. How is this strange conduct to be accounted for? My brethren, there are some circumstances, which may go far to outweigh any man's mere confident assertion, however sincere he may be in making it, and however well qualified he may be to form a judgment on the subject.

All this, however, is entirely digression. I will now return, for a few moments, to the passage which I have read as my text. Suffer me to call your attention to the answer of the Scribe, (verse 32), "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he." In the most approved text of the New Testament at the present day, the word "God" is here rejected as spurious; and the passage reads better without it. The sense will then be, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth, there is but one," or rather, perhaps, "He is one," Jehovah, our God, to whom the commandment relates, "He is one, and there is none other but he." But whether we read it thus, or take it as it stands in our present version, the answer of the Scribe will fairly admit of but one meaning. It is a clear and explicit declaration of his belief in the strict unity of God. It shews in what sense this commandment had been always understood by the Jews, as a precept of the Mosaic law, and that it was now understood by the Scribe in precisely the same sense, when repeated from the lips of Jesus Christ. What, then, is the reply of our Saviour to this confession of the Scribe? Does he give any correction of this man's evident understanding of the first of all the commandments? No,—but when he saw that he answered discreetly, he said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Reflecting, therefore, on all these circumstances, I say, that if we have not here the express authority of Christ, for believing in the unity of God precisely as the ancient Jews believed in it, (and they surely never conceived of three divine persons), I am utterly at a loss to imagine by what words such a meaning could have been conveyed. Yet I am now told that I must not so understand the words of Christ. I am told, that I must not bring my preconceived notions of unity to the interpretation of this solemn commandment of revealed religion. Now, let me ask you a simple question or two on this point. Can you doubt, that the ancient Jews, to whom this commandment was originally addressed, and the Scribe and all the other hearers of Christ to whom it was repeated, can you doubt, I say, that they had some preconceived notion of unity in their minds, when they listened to this commandment? Can you doubt, that it was the very same notion of unity, which I have, and which you have, and which necessarily exists in the minds of all human beings? Can you doubt, that the Maker of man and the Author of revelation knew that this notion of unity was in the minds of his creatures, and that by the light of this

notion they would be sure to interpret his commandment? How is it that in the Scriptures we meet with no caution against understanding this precept in its plain and obvious sense? How is it, that when Moses and Christ are silent, the modern Trinitarian ventures to tell mankind, that they must not understand this commandment according to that preconceived notion of unity, which God must have known to be in the minds of all whose ears the commandment could ever reach?

Once more, therefore, I conceive that I have established the great truth for which I contend, not by any inferential evidence, not by any elaborate comparison of passages in the Old with passages in the New Testament, not by any ingenious deductions from obscure and figurative phraseology, but on the plainest and most express declarations of Holy Writ. Having done this, although I am willing to examine the arguments of the Trinitarian, I maintain that, in fact, the truth of the Unitarian doctrine is already proved. Whatever difficulties or obscurities we may meet with in certain parts of Scripture, we are bound to interpret them consistently with this great fundamental principle of revelation. The Trinitarian objects, however, that the argument is not yet by any means closed. He says, even, that all which I have yet proved is nothing whatever to the purpose. He insists that there are other passages from which it may be certainly inferred, that not the Father exclusively, but Christ also, is God; and that whatever seeming inconsistencies this new proposition may introduce, we are nevertheless bound to embrace it. I consent therefore to go on with the argument. But I beg to remind the Trinitarian, that he is now proceeding to establish, *by inference*, a doctrine which he will find it hard to reconcile with the plainer teaching of the Scriptures. I beg to remind him, that the Scriptures are very ancient books, written in languages no longer spoken on the face of the earth, and full of allusions to customs and modes of thinking no longer familiar to men; and that consequently there may be some parts of these writings which cannot be entirely freed from all obscurity. I beg to remind him, that the Scriptures are Eastern and Jewish writings; that the Jews and all other Eastern people were wont to employ a much bolder and loftier style of expression, in describing the characters and actions of human beings, than we are accustomed to use in the present times; and that, consequently, there may be some danger of our misinterpreting such writings, unless we pay due attention to this difference of style, and be guided by our knowledge of plain, indubitable truths. The advocate of the Trinitarian doctrine does not seem to me to be sufficiently sensible of this danger. He says, that if he finds that the attributes and honors of deity appear to be ascribed to any person,—to Isaiah or Jeremiah, for instance,—he shall immediately conclude that that person is God. I have no doubt of his sincerity in making this assertion. Nevertheless, I doubt

very much if he *would* draw the same inferences in the case of any other person, as he does in regard to Jesus Christ. I doubt this, amongst other reasons, because I find that he *does* not always derive a similar inference from similar premises, as the Scriptures actually stand. And this remark gives me an opportunity of illustrating, by a few examples, the danger which appertains to this kind of inferential evidence. For instance, the name *Elijah*, the name of a well known prophet, signifies, when literally translated, "God Jehovah;" and the name *Melchijah*, the name of one of the family of Aaron, being interpreted, signifies, "Jehovah our King," or "Jehovah my King." In fact, if you look into any good Concordance of the proper names of Jewish Kings, Heroes, Rulers, Prophets, and worthies of every class, you will find that a vast number of them are, in this manner, composed of titles and epithets which properly belong to the supreme God. The Jews were accustomed to give such names to men, not in any case to describe their nature, but in general to describe something in their character, station, or history. Why not infer at once that all these persons were God, because their names, when thus literally interpreted, mean something relating to God? I know it would be an absurd conclusion; but I wish to be shewn the difference, between such an argument, and the argument for the deity of Christ commonly derived from the name *Emanuel*, which, being interpreted, signifies "God with us." Then again, if we insist on always taking the rigid grammatical relation of a pronoun, without regard to known and established truths, we may infer that Moses was God. Turn, for instance, to the 29th chap. of Deuteronomy, and read from the 2nd verse:—"Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land;" and Moses continues thus to be the only speaker, until we come to the 6th verse, when he appears to say to the Israelites, "that ye might know that *I* am the Lord your God." Why not infer from this, that Moses is the Lord God? It were a very absurd conclusion, doubtless; but I see little or no difference, between this argument, and the argument for the proper deity of Christ commonly derived from the close of the 1st General Epistle of John, where it is said, "This is the true God and eternal life." The argument here entirely depends on the strict grammatical relation of the pronoun, which may seem to be to Christ, although the true God is mentioned twice in the same sentence. It may likewise be observed, that the passage to which I have alluded in Deuteronomy, affords another inferential argument for the deity of Moses, as plausible as some which are often used to prove the deity of Christ. In the 5th verse Moses appears to say, "*I* have led you forty years in the wilderness." Yet in the 32nd chap. and 12th verse, speaking of their wandering in the wilderness, it is said, "*The Lord alone* did lead Israel."

Why not infer from this that Moses was the Lord God? It would be a very hasty and absurd conclusion; but how would this argument differ from the argument for the deity of Christ, when it is inferred that, because in Isaiah (chap. 43, v. 11,) Jehovah says, "I even I am the Lord and beside me there is no Saviour," and because Christ is often called our Saviour, therefore Christ is Jehovah? Again, if whenever the works of Providence may seem in Scripture to be ascribed to any person, we are immediately to conclude that this person is God, without regarding the inconsistency of such a conclusion with other principles of revelation, then in this manner also we may conclude that Moses was God. In the 11th chap. and at the 13th verse of the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses is apparently speaking, and he says, "It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul, that *I* will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, and *I* will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full." If we take this strictly as it stands, Moses may seem to declare that he will exercise a divine providence over the Israelites, to give them rain from heaven, and grass in their fields. I believe that in the Septuagint version, both these errors are corrected by simply changing the persons of the verbs. No doubt that it is a mere obscurity or ambiguity, either in the original or in the translation. But this is precisely the nature of many popular arguments for the deity of Christ. Again, it is very commonly argued that Christ is God, because men are said to be baptized into him, as well as into God, even the Father. Now, we read, in the 10th chap. and 2nd verse of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, that all the Israelites "were baptized unto," or into, "Moses;" and in the original, it is the very same expression which the Apostle has twice used (Romans 6th chap. 3rd verse, and Galatians 3rd chap. 27th verse), in speaking of believers being baptized into Christ. Why not conclude from this, that Moses likewise is God? In this case the conclusion would be instantly felt to be absurd; but the argument itself is precisely the same in both cases. Again, it is often contended that Christ is God, because he is represented as being together with God the object of the same actions from men; for instance, that men are said to believe in God, and to believe in Christ. Now, in the 6th chap. and the 11th verse of the Acts of the Apostles, we find that Moses is spoken of as being the object of the same conduct of men together with God: "Then they suborned men which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." I would ask any person well acquainted with this controversy, whether if this had been said of Christ, instead of Moses, it would not have been certainly construed into an argument

that they who uttered these words believed Christ to be God? I can assure you, that there is a great deal of this loose inferential kind of evidence for the deity of Moses. But I will pursue the subject no further; perhaps what I have said already may lead to a misrepresentation of my motives. I am conscious, however, that I have none but serious objects in view. My only purpose is, to illustrate to your minds the danger which lurks in this inferential mode of reasoning from the language of Scripture, in opposition to plain and acknowledged principles.

Now, let me entreat you to consider, what is the character of even the most striking passages which are adduced in support of the deity of Christ. I think I have already shewn you, that they are either wholly irrelevant to the point in dispute, or that they are quite doubtful and ambiguous in their meaning, or that on some other grounds they are entirely insufficient and inconclusive to the purpose for which they are brought forward. And observe; I do not profess to contend for more than this, in respect to some of those passages. I am persuaded, indeed, that it may be clearly demonstrated of *many* passages of Scripture, that their real meaning is different from that which Trinitarians would attach to them. But in regard to *some* passages, I contend for no more than that they are in themselves ambiguous, that they may be interpreted in either of two or more senses, according to the guidance of general principles. Some of them might be not unreasonably thought to refer to the deity of Christ, *if it were certain on other grounds that Christ is God*. But I still maintain, that all these passages may, in strict accordance with the just and admitted rules of Scriptural interpretation, be understood in a different sense, consistent with the Unitarian doctrine of the sole deity of the Father. I contend therefore that we are thrown back upon general principles, to guide us in our decision as to which of two or more admissible interpretations we ought to adopt. Now my particular object in this last Lecture, is to lay before you some of those general considerations, which I think should determine our judgments in favour of the Unitarian interpretation of the few controverted passages. I must beg of those amongst my hearers, who may not have been present at my two former Lectures, to bear this circumstance in mind. Let it be clearly understood, that I do not put forward these general considerations as being in themselves decisive grounds for rejecting the Trinitarian doctrine, in opposition to the undoubted meaning of a single passage of Scripture. I only put them forward as strong reasonable grounds, for being very cautious how you receive that doctrine; and, indeed, as sufficient grounds for rejecting the doctrine at once, if you can believe, as I do most firmly believe, that all the passages commonly adduced in support of it will fairly admit of another interpretation.

1. My first general consideration, then, is, that this doctrine of the proper deity of Christ is no where *stated* in the Scriptures, in that direct and unequivocal manner, which we might naturally have expected from its extreme novelty and extreme importance. Perhaps if I were to say, what I fully believe, that it is never once stated in the Scriptures in any manner, the Trinitarian would object to this as a misrepresentation. Therefore I content myself with saying, that it is not stated in that clear, and direct, and express manner, which its extreme novelty and importance might seem to demand. Or I will put it in this way: I will say, that the doctrine is not stated in the same full and express manner, in which many other doctrines, of confessedly inferior importance, and requiring less evidence to establish them, certainly are stated in the Scriptures. The doctrine of the proper deity of Christ is almost entirely a doctrine built upon *inferences*. You infer, you deduce, that Christ is God, because certain things are said concerning him in the Scriptures, which you think imply that he must be God. That this is the true state of the case, has been again and again admitted by the most zealous advocates for the Trinitarian doctrine; and it cannot be denied by any person who rightly understands the meaning of the assertion. Now, I beseech you to consider, how very differently the case stands with regard to all the great and indisputable doctrines of the Gospel. For example, that there is but one God, and that this one God is the Father,—this is not a mere inference from the language of Scripture, but a plain and express declaration of the Scriptures. “To us” says the Apostle Paul “there is but one God, the Father.” Again, that Jesus was the true Christ, that he was sent from God to be the Saviour of the world,—this is not a mere inference from the language of Scripture, but a plain and express statement of the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul (Acts, chap. 17, v. 3,) addressing the Jews at Thessalonica, after reasoning with them out of the Scriptures, affirms this conclusion, that “this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ,” the true Messiah, foretold by the prophets and expected by all the Jews. Jesus himself declares, (John 12 chap., 49th v.,) “The Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.” The Apostle Peter, immediately after receiving the Holy Spirit, uttered these words, (Acts chap. 2, v. 22nd.), “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Here nothing is left to inference. Here are plain and repeated statements of the divine mission and Messiahship of Jesus Christ. Again, the great doctrine of the forgiveness and the remission of sins, on sincere repentance, through the mercy of God,—this is not a mere inference from the language of Scripture, but a clear and solemn statement

of the Scriptures. "If we confess our sins" (1st. Epistle of John, chap. 1, v. 9,) "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Once more, the all-important doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and of immortal life,—this is not a mere inference from the Scriptures, but a plain and often repeated statement. "The hour is coming," (John chap. 5, v. 28), "in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation." I bring these instances before you, as examples of the manner in which the true and great doctrines of the Gospel are expressly *stated* in the Scriptures. Now, it is not stated in the same express manner, that Jesus Christ is God. It is said, indeed, that the "Word" is God, and as you think that the "Word" means Jesus Christ, and cannot mean any thing else, you thereupon *infer* that Jesus Christ is God. But it is not so *stated* in the Scriptures; and I am convinced that the "Word" has a very different meaning in that passage. Our Saviour himself never says, "I am God, I am Almighty, I am equal to the Father." His Apostles never say, "Jesus Christ whom we preach, is God." We never read in the Scriptures of "God, the Son," as we do read constantly of "God, the Father." There is no such thing in the Scriptures, therefore, as a plain and express statement of the deity of Christ. It is entirely left to be inferred. Remember, at all events, that this *is* the true hinge of the controversy between us. The question is not, whether the doctrine of the Scriptures be true and divine; we acknowledge that it is so. It is not, whether the real teaching of Christ and his Apostles should be received with all faith and reverence; we acknowledge that it should. It is not even, whether it be expressly *stated* in the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father; you must allow that it is not so stated. The question is simply, whether you are right in certain inferences which you draw from certain passages of Scripture, wherein you think the deity of Christ is implied. You think you are right, we think you are wrong, in drawing these inferences. You should especially bear in mind, that this doctrine of the deity of Christ was altogether a new and strange doctrine, which required to be supported by the amplest evidence; and yet you see, that other doctrines, which were less strange and less important, are stated in the Scriptures much more clearly. I present this consideration to your minds, not as being in itself decisive, but only as one out of many considerations, which should make you exceedingly cautious in drawing such inferences from the language of Scripture.

2. My next general consideration is, that Christ is commonly represented by the inspired writers, not as himself God, equal with the Father, but as one who was in perfect subjection and subordination to the Father. In support of this assertion,

I might lay before you almost the whole Gospel History, where the inferiority of Christ to the Father seems to be implied, in the uniform manner of declaring his divine mission and authority. Do not the sacred writers tell us that Christ was the *servant* of God, chosen by him for the accomplishment of a particular work? "Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles." (Matthew chap. 12, v. 18). Are we not informed, that God *appointed* Christ, to fulfil the holy office which he sustained as the spiritual King of men? "He was faithful" says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "to him that appointed him, as Moses also was faithful." We are likewise told, that Christ was *sanctified* by God, that is, was made holy by God, and set apart from the rest of mankind for high and holy purposes. It is the language of Jesus himself, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest?" Did our Saviour come on his heavenly errand on his own accord, in his own name, to do his own will? or in his Heavenly Father's name, as his Messenger, and to do his will? We have the answer in his own words: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. This is life eternal, O Father, that they may know thee, and Jesus Christ *whom thou hast sent*." If we are to draw inferences, surely here are grounds enough for the inference, that Christ was altogether distinct from and inferior to God.

But another view may be taken of this subject; another body of evidence may be brought to bear against the proper deity of our Saviour. He was possessed of wonderful power, wonderful knowledge, wisdom, greatness and authority. They who beheld his astonishing miracles, and heard his sublime teaching, exclaimed, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" A very proper enquiry it was then, and still continues. It was necessary in those days, to determine whether Jesus was the Christ; it is equally necessary now, to determine whether he is properly God. Whence had he these divine endowments? If he be himself God, infinite in all perfection, he had them from eternity, as the unchangeable attributes of his own nature. If, on the other hand, these powers were all given to him by the Father, then the question would appear to be settled, that Christ is not God, equal to the Father. To the law and the testimony, then, let us make our appeal. What read we in the Scriptures?

First. In regard to our Saviour's marvellous knowledge and wisdom, I may refer you to his own declarations, as recorded in any one of the four Gospels, but especially in that which is strangely supposed by Trinitarians to contain the fullest evidence of their doctrine,—the Gospel according to John,—but which I never read without feeling that it is, of all the Gospels, the most completely Unitarian, abounding with the clearest

testimony to the sole deity of the Father, and to the simple, genuine humanity of Christ. "The Father loveth the Son," saith Jesus, and *sheweth* him all things." "As my Father hath *taught* me, I speak these things." "All things that I have *heard* of my Father, I have made known unto you." You perceive it is the doctrine of Jesus, that he had *received* all his knowledge and wisdom from the Father, that by God he had been taught, instructed, inspired, and commanded what he should utter. Could a Being of infinite and underived wisdom have spoken of himself thus? We have all, doubtless, been frequently impressed with that sublime description of the essential wisdom of God, given by the Prophet Isaiah, (chap. 40, v. 13 and 14,) "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his Counsellor, hath *taught* him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and *taught* him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and *showed* to him the way of understanding?" Compare this with the account which Jesus has himself given of the derivation of all his knowledge and wisdom from the Father of spirits, and then I willingly leave to your own judgments the decision of the question, whether Christ can be God, equal with the Father.

Then again, with regard to the power of Christ. That he had miraculous power over the laws of nature, and the most stubborn diseases of the human frame, was clearly shewn throughout his ministry. The blind received their sight, and the deaf their hearing, and the sick arose from their beds, at the command of his voice. I am aware, that these mighty works are generally looked upon as signs of his proper deity, being ascribed to his own omnipotent energy. But how any person can come to this conclusion, with the Scriptures before him, is to me matter of unfeigned astonishment. "I can of my own self do nothing" said Jesus: and again, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." I maintain, that this assertion of our Saviour is a perfect contradiction to the Trinitarian doctrine on the subject of his power. That doctrine is, that all the miraculous works of Christ were wrought by the power, not of the Father, but of a second divine person, God the Son, which is Christ himself. Jesus, however, declares that they were wrought by the power of the Father, dwelling in him;—which is precisely the Unitarian doctrine. I doubt not, that you may find other passages in which Christ claims to work miracles without at the time immediately ascribing the power to God; but I say that, after this solemn declaration from his own lips, it is neither reasonable nor decent in you, to infer from such a circumstance that he pretended to work miracles by his own divine power. It is remarkable, that the miraculous power of Jesus, and the miraculous power of the Apostles, is sometimes spoken of in the Scriptures in exactly similar terms. Peter, for instance, calls Jesus "a man approved of God, by miracles which *God did by him.*" In the

Acts of the Apostles, (chap. 15, v. 12,) we read that "all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders *God had wrought by them.*" Can we suppose, that the inherent, essential power of an Almighty Being, would thus be spoken of, by inspired men, in the same terms in which they speak of their own miraculous power, confessedly derived from God?

Neither, if we direct our thoughts to the still higher power and glory of Christ, in his present exalted state, shall we see any reason to change our views on this subject. "Glorify thy Son," says Christ to the Father, "that thy Son also may glorify thee, *as thou hast given him power over all flesh.*" "All power is *given unto me* in heaven and earth." The glorious event of the resurrection of Christ, and the increased power and authority which he then displayed, are always ascribed to the favour of God. The Apostle Paul speaks of "the mighty power of God, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." We are told, that he first *received* from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then imparted it to his disciples. Now, every word of this kind affords strong evidence, that Christ himself is not God, but entirely distinct from and subordinate to God, from whom he received all his high miraculous endowments.

Do not imagine, my brethren, that I think there is no possible answer to all this evidence against the proper deity of Christ. I know there is an answer to be given; and I know what it is. I shall be told, that all this, which implies the inferiority of Christ, is said of him either in reference to his human nature alone, or in reference merely to his mediatorial capacity;—that in these respects only, and not in his original proper nature, he was inferior and subordinate to the Father. I know that this must and will be said; because, in fact, there is nothing else to be said. But I exhort you to consider, that no such explanation of their language is ever given by the inspired writers themselves. They uniformly speak of Christ in this manner, as subject to the Father, and receiving all his greatness from the Father, without the slightest reserve or caution of any kind; and they never once warn us to be careful, not to understand these declarations in their plain, obvious meaning. I contend, therefore, that we are bound to receive their teaching on this subject, without any such strange and arbitrary qualifications as Trinitarians would adopt. I know very well, that if the Trinitarian be allowed to *assume*, at every step of the argument, that Christ *had* two natures,—and to say, whenever he meets with a testimony of Scripture which he cannot otherwise evade, "this relates to the divine nature, and that relates to the human nature, this relates to Christ in his highest glory, and that relates to him only in his mediatorial office,"—I know that in this way we have no chance of absolutely confuting the Trinitarian. And I maintain that it would be the same, if the

same assumption were allowed, had the language of the Scriptures been whatever it might. Had our Saviour declared, again and again, that he was not God, that he was not Almighty, that he was not Omniscient, that he was not equal to the Father; I see not why the Trinitarian might not then have replied, as he does now, "O, all that relates to Christ only in his human nature, or only in his mediatorial capacity,—nevertheless he is God, he is Almighty, Omniscient, and equal to the Father, in his proper divine nature." I say, it were impossible either to prove or disprove any thing, on such arbitrary conditions. Observe; I do not object to the right of the Trinitarian, to make use of any doctrine which he firmly believes to be a doctrine of the Scriptures, for his own satisfaction in elucidating certain obscure passages. I cannot deny him, or any Christian believer, this right. But the present case is of a very different kind. We are at present considering, not certain obscure passages, but the common, uniform representation of the Scriptures, that Christ received all his power and wisdom from the Father. Besides, the doctrine, which in this evasion the Trinitarian *assumes*, namely, that Christ *has* a divine as well as a human nature, or that he has any higher dignity than that which belongs to him as Mediator,—this is the very doctrine the truth of which we are discussing;—and I do maintain, that for the Trinitarian, in the course of this discussion, to say at every turn, whenever it may suit his convenience, "such a thing was said of Christ only in reference to his human nature, or, only in reference to his mediatorial capacity," thereby *assuming* that he has a divine nature and a higher glory,—I do maintain, that this is a gross instance of that which we have lately heard so much declaimed against, the *petitio principii*, or complete begging of the question.

3rd. My next general consideration is, that the uniform conduct and history of Christ, as we read it in the Scriptures, indicates that he was not God. You know that he came into the world, being born of a woman, like all other human beings. You know that he grew up from infancy to manhood, advancing in favour with God and man. You know that he exhibited all the natural signs of a proper humanity; that he hungered and thirsted, grew weary and sorrowful, wept and suffered and died. All this is too clearly related in the Scriptures, to be disputed by any class of Christians, at least in modern times. But what I wish you to consider is, whether the Trinitarian position, that all this time Christ was truly and properly God, does not completely destroy the simplicity (I will use no stronger term,) the simplicity of his character, of his words and actions, in these respects, and the moral efficacy of his holy, beneficent example?

First, then, I would call your attention to that numerous class of passages, in which our Saviour expressly *denies* that he himself is possessed of certain divine attributes, and ascribes

all such perfections exclusively to another person, whom he denominates God, his Father. He declares, for instance, that he has not in himself essential, almighty power,—“I can of mine own self do nothing.” “The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” He declares also, in the most solemn manner, that he is not possessed of Omniscience. Referring to the day of judgment he says, “Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father.” Now, what is the view of our Saviour’s character and words, in making these professions, which is suggested by the Unitarian opinion of his nature? The simplest—you must allow,—the simplest, clearest, plainest view, that can be imagined. We are enabled to believe, that it *was* with Christ precisely as he seems to affirm, that he was not, in any way or in any sense, possessed of these divine attributes. We recognise in these declarations of Jesus, simple, unqualified truth, without the least reservation or mystery of any kind. We also recognise in them, (give me leave to say,) the most interesting evidences of our Saviour’s personal humility and piety. We behold one, who was exalted by God to the highest degree of spiritual authority, always meekly confessing his entire dependence on the divine giver of all good gifts. Here, therefore, everything is plain, consistent, and deeply instructive. But what view of the character and words of Christ, in these respects, is suggested by the Trinitarian opinion of his nature? Why, according to this opinion, our Saviour, at the very moment when he was uttering these declarations, *had* all those divine perfections, which he said that he had *not*. He *could* do all things of himself; he *did* know the time of the day of judgment; he *was* Almighty and Omniscient. How, then, can the words of Christ, in these particulars, be reconciled with strict veracity and simplicity of intention? You know the usual explanation. Trinitarians say, that when Christ uttered such things, he spoke merely in reference to his human nature, or to his mediatorial capacity. Now, not to insist again, that this is a most unreasonable assumption of the very question in dispute, I may surely say that, compared with the Unitarian view of our Saviour’s words, it is strange, perplexing, subtle. There may not be an absolute want of veracity, but there is surely great want of simplicity, in the character and teaching of Christ, when thus contemplated. The wayfaring man, methinks, might have read the Scriptures for ever, if untutored in schools of theology, and he never would have discovered that Christ had such a hidden reservation in his words. I cannot but think, however, that if I chose to press the subject, it might easily be shown that the Trinitarian hypothesis is liable to even more serious objections.

But I call your attention to another numerous class of passages, in which our Lord is said to have been *tried* and *tempted*, and to have *suffered* both in body and mind. Every reader of the Scriptures must be aware that such passages *are*

numerous. We read that, in the commencement of his ministry, Jesus Christ spent forty days in solitude, in the wilderness undergoing the most powerful and varied temptations. You know that there is scarcely any form of human distress, which is not ascribed to our Saviour in the Scriptures. He mourned in sympathy with his afflicted friends; he was awed and depressed at the approach of his own crucifixion; he cried out in the agonies of death, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Again, I would ask, what is the view of our Lord's character and ways in these instances, which is afforded by the Unitarian doctrine concerning his nature? Is it not perfectly simple, rational, consistent, edifying, and affecting? We are enabled to believe, again, that it *was* with Christ in all these respects, precisely as it is related in the Scriptures, without the slightest drawback or qualification of any kind. We believe that, being in nature simply human, he did really endure, as any other human creature would have done, all these sufferings of body and soul, and all these severe trials of his piety; but that being a most holy and righteous person, and being moreover constantly under the guiding, supporting influence, of God's Holy Spirit, he was able to resist all temptation, without contracting one stain of sin, and thus to be made perfect through suffering, without once wavering in his obedience and submission to his heavenly Father. To our minds, in short, the history and character of Christ, in these particulars, afford a simple, although a perfect, manifestation of human piety and virtue. But according to the Trinitarian opinion of Christ's nature, he, who is said to be thus tempted and tried, and to have endured these bitter sufferings, was all this time the Eternal and Immutable God. How is this to be reconciled with truth and possibility? We surely know that God cannot be tempted, neither can he suffer. We know that the ever-blessed God could not weep, and be sorrowful and heavy in his spirit. We know that the immortal God could not die, and therefore could not have been afflicted at the prospect of death. How then could Christ be truly subject to those feelings, if he were truly God? You know, again, what is the usual answer. We are told, that Christ suffered all these things only in his human nature. The answer is grounded on a palpable fallacy. Unless Christ consisted of two persons, (which no Trinitarian maintains,) his having two natures will not meet the objection; inasmuch as it is not what we call the nature of any person, abstractedly considered, that either suffers or enjoys, but it is the person, the conscious, intelligent being himself. Was Christ one being, one person, or two? You say, one. Was Christ God? You say, yes. Did Christ suffer, and was he tempted? You again say, yes. Then we answer that, distinguish with as much subtlety as you may, between the supposed divine and human natures of this

one person, still it was God who suffered and was tempted. And permit me to say, my brethren, that I think a very ingenious principle which I have lately heard advanced by the Trinitarian, may be here directly turned against himself. In replying to the Unitarian argument against the deity of Christ from his own declaration that he knew not the day of judgment, we have recently heard it laid down, "that although the less cannot include the greater, yet the greater must include the less; and therefore, though the human knowledge of Jesus could not include his divine, yet his divine knowledge must include all his human knowledge, and infinitely more; and therefore that although Christ might not know the day of judgment in his human nature, yet he knew it in his divine nature." I thought this at the time very ingenious,—not sound at all,—but clever and ingenious. I now clearly perceive, however, that whilst it may serve the Trinitarian's purpose well enough, in speaking of any thing *negative* in the human nature of Christ, (as for example, his ignorance of the day of judgment,) yet the moment we come to speak of any thing *positive* in the human nature of Christ, then this very ingenious principle is immediately converted into a formidable weapon against the Trinitarian himself. The sorrows and sufferings of Christ were, unlike his ignorance, something *positive*, something actually experienced by him in his human nature; and therefore, since the greater must include the less, the divine consciousness of our Saviour must have included his human consciousness in these respects. On the Trinitarian's own favourite principle, therefore, it clearly follows, that when Christ suffered and was tempted, it was God who suffered and was tempted. What perplexity, what confusion, what inconsistency and absurdity, this doctrine introduces into our views of the divine nature, requires no further explanation.

4th. My next general consideration is, that the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ is most incredible, because we nowhere meet, in the Scriptures, with any signs of the stupendous effects which must have been produced by the first discovery of it, both on the minds of the inspired teachers themselves, and on the minds of their converts. Consider well what the circumstances are, as the Trinitarian views them. There is no ground, I apprehend, for supposing that either the Jewish people at large, or the personal followers of Christ, had in the beginning of his Ministry the remotest conception that he was God. They knew that he had been born amongst them as a human being, and that he had exhibited all the ordinary wants and sensibilities of human nature. They had travelled about with him from place to place, shared with him in his toils and sufferings, leant upon his bosom in friendly confidence, and several times even raised objections to his conduct. They had beheld him seized by the hands of his ruthless enemies, suspended on

the cross, and yielding up his spirit to death. Up to this time, unquestionably, the disciples could not have had the most distant conception, that the person with whom they had thus lived and conversed was their own Almighty Jehovah. And yet you say, that they soon afterwards taught this doctrine to the world, as an essential principle of the Gospel. There must have been a period in their history, therefore, when this awful conviction first fell upon their minds. Or if you suppose it to have been wrought ever so gradually, there must have been a period when they at length became convinced, that the person whom they had thus seen, and handled, and embraced, and rebuked, was the Eternal Maker of Heaven and Earth. I say, then, shew me, from the Scriptures, when that period was, shew me from the Scriptures the signs of this wonderful change having been wrought in the minds of the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus. You must allow, that it was beyond all comparison the most astonishing revolution that ever took place in the views and feelings of human beings. Yet you cannot point out, in the sacred History, any signs whatever of this change having been wrought and manifested. I ask if this be possible, on the supposition that the facts were as the Trinitarian must believe? But another view may be taken of the subject. We may consider the effects which this announcement of the proper deity of Christ must have produced not only on the minds of his own disciples, but also on the minds of his enemies. It is well known, that the Jews in general did not believe in our Saviour. They continued to be the bitterest enemies of Christ, of his Apostles, and of his religion. Their ingenuity and malignity were constantly upon the stretch, to discover the most popular and formidable objections to the Gospel. You know that the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, abound with accounts of various controversies carried on between the unbelieving Jews and the Apostles. The writings of Paul, in particular, chiefly consist of answers to objections, and explanations of difficulties, put forward by the Jews against the new religion of the Gospel. We meet with controversies concerning the observance of the Mosaic Law, and on many other points opposed to the prejudices of the Jewish nation. But was there any controversy between the unbelieving Jews and Apostles concerning this, the most startling and strange of all the doctrines of the Gospel, the doctrine of the proper deity of him who had been crucified on Calvary? Not a word of this kind is any where to be met with. We know, to a certainty, that with the views which all the Jewish people entertained of the nature of the true God, such a doctrine as this would have appeared to them the strongest and most fatal of all objections to the Gospel; indeed, the most revolting and insulting dogma that ever was presented to the human mind. In this light they most assuredly would have regarded it; and yet there is no sign, in the Scriptures, of their having ever urged

this objection to the Gospel, in all their disputes with the followers of Jesus. I ask, again, if this be possible, on the supposition that the facts were as the Trinitarian believes? There is still another circumstance, which requires to be attended to in this connexion. If this doctrine of the deity of Christ be true, surely the Apostles must have felt it to be their solemn duty, to make it a prominent subject of their teaching; and especially would they have put it foremost, on all those occasions when they had to state the leading and fundamental principles of Christianity, whether to Jews or Gentiles; for instance, when Peter addressed the multitudes at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, immediately after his mind had been enlightened concerning the truths of the Gospel, by the descent of the Holy Spirit; and again, when he visited the house of Cornelius, having been sent there on purpose to communicate the essential truths of Christianity to a serious and devout inquirer. Could he have neglected such opportunities of preaching this supposed fundamental doctrine of the Gospel? Could any modern Trinitarian Missionary have done so in similar circumstances? Yet, on these occasions, Peter speaks of Christ merely as "a man approved of God;" whom "God had raised from the dead; whom God had anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good, for God was with him." In short, he speaks of Christ precisely as Unitarians are accustomed to speak of him, without uttering one syllable concerning his proper deity. And the language of all the other Apostles, on all similar occasions, is entirely of the same character. How is this to be accounted for? You cannot say, that it is because we have in the Scriptures only very brief accounts of the preaching of the Apostles. *That* would rather seem to be a reason that we should expect to find, in these narratives, some mention of so essential and important a doctrine of their religion. Yet it is not from these sources, that the Trinitarian is able to derive even his imaginary inferential evidence for the deity of Christ. Neither can you say, that the Apostles concealed this obnoxious truth, lest it should expose them to reproach and persecution. *That* would be to bring a very groundless and unjust accusation against them. We know that they did bravely expose themselves to obloquy, and persecution, and death, in defence of many other truths and principles of the Gospel which Trinitarians themselves consider to be of less importance. It was the boast of the Apostles, that they were "pure from the blood of all men, for that they had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God." I can perceive, therefore, no other reasonable account for the silence of the Apostles concerning this doctrine, even on the most urgent occasions, but simply that it was a doctrine with which they were totally unacquainted.

5. My next and last general consideration, is one of a very serious nature, and one which I confess that I bring forward

with some reluctance. It is a consideration which I would not urge, if it were not that I have a strong feeling of my obligation to do so, in order to render full justice to the important argument in which I am engaged. I submit to you, then, that Christ is not God, because if he be, then, whatever may be said in creeds, there are, to all practical purposes, *two Gods*; that is, two perfectly distinct objects of supreme religious adoration and service. Now, I am very well aware that the Trinitarian controversialist will deny this. Trinitarians declare, that they believe in and worship only one God. I am quite satisfied of their sincerity in making such a declaration. Therefore, let it be clearly understood that I do not take upon myself, absolutely, to charge Trinitarians with being Polytheists, or Tritheists, or worshippers of more than one God. I know that they would repudiate such a charge with indignation. I acknowledge that they have an undoubted right, as I and all other Christians have, to give and to abide by their own account of their own faith. Therefore, I say, let it be distinctly understood, that I do not absolutely pronounce that Trinitarians serve a plurality of Gods. But then, it must also be understood, that my only reason for not saying so, is simply because I am aware that *they* sincerely and earnestly deny it, and because I feel myself bound to show respect to their sincere declaration. Nevertheless, when I am discussing the truth of their doctrine, I hold myself at liberty, merely as a part of my argument, to state my own conscientious views on this subject. I submit to you, therefore, not as a matter of accusation, but simply as a matter of argument, that Christ is not God, because then, whatever may be said in creeds, there are practically at least two Gods to be devoutly served and worshipped. Recollect, my brethren, that I am not now speaking to you about your creeds. Creeds, you know, are altogether human compositions. I am not speaking to you merely of certain propositions, which learned Theologians in past ages may have drawn up, and to which you may now be willing enough to declare your assent. I am speaking to you of your own real, practical, religious views and sentiments. I wish you for a moment to forget your creeds, and to look into your minds and hearts, where alone true religion abides; and to ask yourselves, what are your actual impressions and feelings, when you worship, severally, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost? when you praise God the Father, for sending God the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and when, in the next breath, you praise God the Son for mercifully undertaking this gracious work? Are they not, in your minds, in your mental conceptions and feelings, regarded as two distinct beings? as much so as Peter and Paul, or any other two persons of whom you ever think and speak? If it be not so, if I am entirely mistaken on this point, then I grant that my present argument, as far as you are concerned, falls to the ground. But I declare to you solemnly, that it seems to me

quite impossible that it should be otherwise, in the minds of all those who are any thing more than nominal Trinitarians. In order to set this consideration in its true light, suffer me to remind you where and how you become acquainted with the Father and the Son. It is not from the Athanasian creed, it is from the New Testament, that you acquire all your real knowledge, concerning these persons. How, then, are they uniformly spoken of in the New Testament? What is the impression which is unavoidably made on your minds, by a perusal of the Scriptures, concerning the Father and the Son? Is it not, that the Father sends the Son, and the Son acknowledges himself to be the messenger of the Father? Is it not, that the Son says to the Father, "Not my will but thine be done?" Is it not, in fact, that they sustain certain relations to one another, and act certain parts towards one another, from the beginning to the end of the Sacred History? And since it is undoubtedly so, I ask you, if it be possible for you to conceive of Jesus Christ and his Heavenly Father otherwise than as two perfectly distinct beings, or persons? And if it be undoubtedly so, I ask you again, whether this does not practically destroy the great principle of the unity of God, and introduce two Gods, that is to say, two distinct beings or persons, each of whom is to be religiously served and worshipped? I will urge this consideration no further. I beseech you to think of it again and again; reflect on it closely and seriously; ponder it well in all its consequences, until you are fully satisfied in your own minds; and then I have no doubt what will be the conclusion at which you will arrive.

And now, my Christian brethren, and my Trinitarian friends in particular, I think I have stated all the general considerations which I meant to lay before you. Do me the favour to recollect what I said at the beginning of this Lecture; that these general considerations are not brought forward by me, as being in themselves decisive against believing that Christ is God, in opposition to the testimony of any portion of Scripture. By no means. They are brought forward by me, only as strong grounds,—I think they are reasonable grounds,—for suspecting the doctrine of the deity of Christ, if you have any serious doubts as to the meaning of the controverted passages of Scripture; and especially for rejecting that doctrine without further hesitation, if you should be convinced, as I myself am thoroughly convinced, that all those passages are fairly susceptible of an interpretation consistent with our belief in the sole, exclusive deity of the Father. Let it be clearly understood, at all events, that this is my own account of my own argument. I will not be misunderstood—I may be misrepresented,—I will not be misunderstood on this subject. I have not said, and I do not mean to insinuate, that these, or any other general considerations, will justify us in rejecting the doctrine of the deity of Christ, if

we believe that this doctrine is taught in any part of the Scriptures. My own belief in the sole deity of the Father does not rest entirely on such general considerations ; still less is it founded entirely on the dictates of my own reason. My belief in the sole deity of the Father, and my disbelief of the proper deity of Christ, are founded on my thorough persuasion that the former is the plain, uniform doctrine of the Scriptures, and that the latter is not taught in any single passage.

After all, I know that it is very easy for a person to take his stand upon certain passages of Scripture, which, because they happen to be obscure or ambiguous, it is impossible for the Unitarian to prove, to a demonstration, *may not* refer to the deity of Christ. It is easy, I say, for a person to take his stand on certain passages, or even on a single passage, of this kind, and to say, "This you cannot absolutely confute, and therefore on this ground I shall build my faith in the proper deity of Jesus Christ." I can only answer, that every man must be guided by his own feelings of what is right and proper ; but to my mind, this appears to be a very wrong and a very improper method of judging on this subject. It may, perhaps, be called a rigidly logical method of reasoning. I doubt very much if it be so ; but even if it is, it may be none the better for that, if it be a method of reasoning entirely unsuitable to the nature of the subject, and the nature of the evidence. I hold, that this is not a suitable theme for the exercise of mere logical pertinacity. I hold, that it is a plain subject, on which our judgments should be determined by the plain testimony of the Scriptures. I do not mean to speak disparagingly of the useful science of logic ; nor do I mean to concede for a moment, that they who argue for the Trinitarian doctrine are any better logicians than other people. But I say, that it is not by subtle rules of logic, so much as by rational principles of Scriptural interpretation, that this religious controversy is to be decided. I humbly conceive, that those persons who will say,—“Notwithstanding that there is but one God, and the Father is God, and Jesus Christ is a distinct person from the Father ; notwithstanding that this doctrine of the deity of Christ is nowhere explicitly stated in the Scriptures, as other doctrines, even less important doctrines, are stated, but is left entirely to human inference ; notwithstanding that Christ is uniformly spoken of, in the Scriptures, as being subject and subordinate to the *Father*, who is declared to be the only true God ; notwithstanding that Christ was unquestionably a man, and is every where represented in the Scriptures as enduring all those trials and sufferings, which God cannot, and which none but a creature can, experience ; notwithstanding that we meet in Scripture with no signs of the wonderful and awful change, which must have been wrought in the minds of our Lord's first disciples, by the discovery that he, whom they had seen and handled, was Almighty God ; notwithstanding that the doctrine of the deity of Christ is never

alluded to by the Apostles, in their preaching, even on those most important occasions when they had to announce the fundamental principles of their religion; notwithstanding that this objection never appears to have been urged against the Gospel, at its first publication, by the unbelieving Jews, although it is certain that it would have been to their minds the strongest of all objections; notwithstanding that this doctrine of the deity of Christ does seem to destroy the practical value and influence of the doctrine of the unity of God, by introducing two distinct objects of supreme religious adoration; notwithstanding all this, yet, because there are a few passages of Scripture from which the deity of Christ may be in a certain manner inferred, therefore we will so interpret those passages, and we will believe that Christ is God;"—I humbly conceive that those persons who argue and judge in this way, are pursuing a very unjustifiable method of reasoning. They may be great logicians. They are not, however, good reasoners, but, thus far, the very worst of reasoners, because they reason in a way altogether unsuited to the nature of the evidence and of the subject.

Perhaps I shall be expected to say a few words, in conclusion, on the moral influences of the Trinitarian and Unitarian Doctrines respectively. It is a theme on which I feel that I could expatiate long and largely; but not, I fear, without the risk of saying that which might appear invidious. On this branch of the subject, therefore, which is but collateral to the main argument, I shall be very brief. I apprehend, that we are all of us very indifferent judges of the value and influence of other men's religious sentiments. We know the value and efficacy of our own faith, having felt and proved its power. We cannot so well judge of the efficacy of a faith which we have never experienced. I can only testify, that to the best of my humble judgment,—whether that be altogether blinded, or moderately enlightened, God alone knows,—but having been a Minister of the Gospel for more than fifteen years, I can only testify that to the best of my judgment, I have seen the Unitarian faith produce, in very many instances, on the hearts and conduct of men, and on the departing spirit, all that is necessary to complete the salvation and the happiness of human beings. I will not proceed to controvert what I have lately heard advanced, on this head, in favour of the Trinitarian doctrine. I will not venture to tell you of all the influences which I think I can discern in the popular faith. It is very possible that I may be mistaken in this respect; it is very certain, that to my Trinitarian hearers I should appear to be mistaken. But you will allow me to state, in a few words, what influence I discern in the Unitarian view of Christianity. I perceive that all that is calculated to fill the mind of a serious believer, (amongst us, as amongst all sects, there are undoubtedly some who are *not* serious,) therefore I say, all that is

calculated to fill the mind of a *serious* believer, with a deep, humbling sense of his own personal unworthiness in the sight of God; and with a most lively conviction of the wonderful compassion and all-conquering love of Christ; and with a devout feeling of the infinite, forgiving mercy of God; and with an awful sense of the great malignity and danger of sin; and with a solemn dread of the judgment which awaits the impenitent, and equally, with the joyful anticipation of the glory, honour, and immortality, prepared for all the sincere followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In regard to the Atonement, I deny that there is any thing in the Unitarian view of the person of Christ at all inconsistent with the doctrine delivered in the Scriptures, on this important subject; any thing inconsistent with the belief of a most interesting and affecting doctrine of *Atonement*, which is, the reconciliation of sinners unto God. I know, indeed, that our view of the nature of Christ is inconsistent with the present popular notions of the Atonement, which make it to consist in an infinite satisfaction having been made to the justice of God, by the blood of his own infinite Son. But then I beseech you to consider, that this, again, is not a statement of the Scriptures, but a mere inference which some men draw from the language of Scripture, a mere human explanation of the Atonement. With all that is actually delivered in the Scriptures, concerning the reconciliation of sinners unto God, through faith in Christ, and through the efficacy of his sufferings and death,—with all this, I will ever contend that the Unitarian doctrine is perfectly consistent.

In regard to the forgiveness of sins, I am ready to acknowledge, that the Unitarian doctrine is not adapted to foster any of those sudden convictions and conversions, any of those unseemly expressions of triumphant confidence, which a very natural abuse of the popular doctrine, if not the doctrine itself, too often produces. And I fearlessly appeal to every sober-minded believer, of every Church, whether this be not an argument rather for than against our views of the Gospel. But I am sure, that the Unitarian doctrine can produce, in the mind of every sincere believer, a strong and peaceful sense of the forgiving mercy of God; such a feeling as it becomes a frail and dependent creature to cherish. I protest that, of all the charges commonly preferred against the Unitarian faith, this charge of its being cold, dead, and inefficacious in its moral influences on the heart, seems to me the most preposterous. In the views which it gives of the attributes, ways, and purposes of God; in the representations which it affords of the mind that was in Christ Jesus, so holy and so meek, so full of piety towards God, and of compassion to men; in the solemn truths and promises, the means of grace and hopes of glory, which it holds out to the faithful; the Unitarian doctrine seems to me powerful to awaken, in the bosoms of all true believers, emotions

as ardent as they are pure, as full of a steady and genial warmth, as they are free from the grossness and violence of feeling, to which certain popular errors so frequently lead. Can any man give me a reason why the contrary should be supposed? Why should simple and rational views of religion be thought incapable of powerfully affecting the heart? Does it absolutely require the mystery, the perplexity, and the terror striking dogmas, of the popular creed, to influence a mind at all disposed to cherish sober and rational piety? The principal points on which we differ from Trinitarian Christians, relate to the strict *Unity* of God's nature, and the strict *Paternity* of his character and ways. We believe that God is *One*, to the exclusion of all personal divisions and distinctions, of whatever kind. We believe that he is a *Father*, and acts always as a Father towards all his intelligent creatures. We hold these doctrines of the divine Unity, and the divine Paternity, free from all admixture with any opinions of a contrary tendency; and thus we allow these great truths to operate with all their proper, concentrated energy, on our affections of reverence, admiration, gratitude and love. Whatever of true and proper deity the orthodox system ascribes to Jesus, we of course ascribe to the only true God, the Father. I contend, therefore, that nothing is lost by us, so far as relates to furnishing the mind with a suitable object for the exercise of all its devout and trustful affections; unless, indeed, Trinitarians mean to say, that they enjoy an advantage over us, in having three objects of supreme adoration instead of one. We have *One* infinitely holy and compassionate Being, to love with all the heart, with all the mind, and with all the soul. Have they more than *One*? or if they have, is it possible that they can so love more than *One*? It likewise appears to us, that our views of the nature of Christ enable us to understand more clearly, to appreciate more justly, and to feel more strongly, the glorious example of all righteousness which Jesus exhibited as a man, sanctified and devoted unto God. Jesus is not, to our minds, the *same* object of reverence and love as God, his and our heavenly Father. He is a perfectly distinct object of reverence, but one greatly adapted to call forth the warmest and strongest sympathies of our hearts. We behold in him, one of our own race, carried onwards by his unutterable love and compassion for men, by the wonderful strength of his piety and of his benevolence, through unexampled sufferings, shame and death, for our salvation. Believing in such a Saviour, therefore, and believing, at the same time, in one all-merciful God, his Father and our Father, is it possible that we can be destitute of a faith abounding with all good moral and spiritual influences? Oh no! depend on it, that this accusation against the Unitarian doctrine is in every point of view frivolous and vexatious.

And now, my Christian friends, I close the discussion of this subject for the present. Whether I shall feel myself

called on soon to resume the controversy, will depend entirely on circumstances. I shall certainly not be backward to exercise the right of doing so, if it shall appear to me necessary, in vindication of those principles which I believe to comprise the truth as it is in Jesus. In particular, if the proper subject shall be departed from, in order to attack the conduct and personal character of Unitarians, I shall appeal confidently, not so much to the charity, as to the justice of my Christian neighbours, of every sect and party, for an impartial hearing, in defence of myself, and the people with whom I am connected, against all such accusations. But I hope and trust that nothing of the kind is likely to occur on the present occasion. I am very sensible, how inadequately, compared with what some others might have done, I have vindicated the great and glorious principle of the sole deity of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I have the comfortable satisfaction of feeling, that I have not conducted this controversy in any unfair or uncharitable manner. I have manifested no sentiments of contempt or bitterness towards those who differ from me. I am not conscious that I have ever turned aside from the subject, to cast aspersions upon the body of Trinitarian believers in general, or upon the Church of England in particular, which in her proper religious capacity, as a venerable portion of the Universal Church of Christ, I respect and esteem in the highest degree. I have indulged in no reflections on the Clergy of that Church, nor on any individual Clergyman. And I crave the liberty of saying, that if I have, (as I hope is the case,) abstained from every thing of this kind, it has not been because I have kept a bridle on my tongue, but because I have no feeling in my heart which could induce me to act otherwise.

Allow me, my Christian brethren, finally, to exhort you to search for the knowledge of the truth in all sincerity, and to embrace and profess what you believe to be the truth in peace and love. Let us always remember, that whatever may be our present unavoidable divisions, we have all one Father in Heaven, and one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LECTURE FOURTH.*

JOHN, c. 1., v. 1.

“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.”

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—

When I last addressed you, I stated that whether I should feel myself called on to resume the discussion, in which I was then engaged, on the unity of God, would depend entirely on circumstances. You are aware that the circumstances to which I must have been supposed to allude have now occurred. The gentleman to whom I am opposed in this controversy has returned, according to his promise, and delivered four more discourses, in support of the doctrine of the deity of Christ and of the Trinity. It is my intention, therefore, now to deliver three more Lectures. In commencing my task, however, I will first make you one or two promises. I promise you that, on this occasion, I will not take up one moment of your time in paying compliments to my reverend opponent. I find that I have been complained of for doing so on the former occasion. I have no desire to recall or recant any thing of that kind which I may have said, because I am conscious that it was uttered at the time in perfect sincerity. I certainly did understand it to be the declared wish and intention of my reverend opponent, that a Christian and courteous spirit should pervade this controversy throughout. I was therefore most anxious to second what I understood to be his sincere wishes in this respect, by saying all that I could say with truth,—not a word more,—of a

* The *reader* of these Lectures may need to be informed that, after the conclusion of the former three, the Rev. Daniel Bagot returned to Exeter, from a distant part of the kingdom, and delivered four more discourses in St. Sidwell's Church, to which the following three Lectures were given in reply.

civil and conciliatory nature towards him. Was this such an unpardonable error? My friends,—if I thought him a man of truly candid and charitable dispositions,—if I thought him a man incapable, after he had himself begun the controversy with solemn declarations that he disapproved of all asperity and acrimony of spirit in religious discussion, and having by his own public challenge induced me to reply, who, but for the confidence that I placed in those declarations, should have disdained to meddle with the controversy,—if I thought him a man incapable after this, the moment he felt reason and Scripture to be against him, of resorting to accusations of ignorance, audacity, effrontery, perverseness, and scepticism, against his opponent,—if I thought him such a man as would not, when he found his argument exhausted, betake himself to vituperation, and to the utterance of ten thousand times refuted slanders upon the pious dead,—if I thought all this of him, and if I was mistaken, (which I leave to be decided by your impartial judgment), I do yet venture to hope, that it will be considered to have been an error on the right side;—and I am now very willing to make my opponent the only reparation in my power, by thus publicly begging his pardon for having fallen into such a deplorable mistake. I again promise you that I will not, on this occasion, take up a moment of your time in paying him compliments for his liberality and candour. But, on the other hand, if I can at all trust my own feelings, I may likewise promise you that I shall not resort to the employment of any abusive or offensive language. I will not, at every turn of the argument,—(especially whenever I meet with some strong reasoning of my opponent which I may feel it difficult to answer, and therefore may wish to raise a mist of passion and prejudice before your eyes, that you may not see clearly what predicament I am in,)—I will not, at every such turn of the argument, talk of my opponent's ignorance, audacity, blindness, and effrontery. If I felt ever so strong an inclination to do so, I should be afraid to venture upon it; and I will tell you why. I should be afraid that, the moment you heard *me* talk in this strain, you would be apt to say to yourselves,—“Ah! that man evidently feels that he has the worst of the argument; when a disputant turns aside from the direct and sober discussion of his subject, to charge his opponent with perverseness and audacity, and a thousand other evil qualities, it is a tolerably sure sign that he is not able to maintain his opinion by any better means.” I say, that I should fear you would draw this conclusion in *my* case, if I were to resort to such a course of vituperation; and therefore, if I felt ever so strong an inclination this way, (whereas I feel none at all,) I should yet carefully abstain from it as an act of good policy. If therefore any of my present hearers, who may likewise have been his hearers during his last four

discourses, shall be of opinion that my reverend opponent in this controversy is one of the most temperate, candid, and withal, humble-minded controversialists that ever adorned the Christian ministry,—even within the pale of the dignified Church of England,—I faithfully promise them that they shall not hear from me any contradiction of this fond opinion. I think, nevertheless, that if you will give me your patient attention to the close of these Lectures, I shall be able to shew you that my reverend opponent is chargeable with a greater number of mistakes, sophistries, misrepresentations, and some other things which I cannot so well describe, than almost any man ever committed, on any subject, within the same limits. I am aware that if this assertion shall appear to you in the end to be totally unfounded, it will then tell against me. I know this; I feel it; yet I do not hesitate to make the assertion.

Suffer me now, before I enter on the particular topic with which I must chiefly occupy your attention this evening, just to state, in a few words, the course I mean to pursue in regard to the general subject. I shall deliver three Lectures, including the present. In these Lectures I shall take notice of the fresh arguments and objections lately brought forward by my opponent; but I shall notice them in that way, *and to that extent, with respect to particularity of details*, which my own judgment teaches me to be the best adapted to keep the real question, and the *real evidence* by which it must be decided, directly and perspicuously before your attention. On this point I shall be influenced by no man's dictation, by no man's jeers or scoffs. It is a very pleasant thing, indeed, for my opponent to tell me, that if he chooses to bring forward passage after passage without number, running on with race-horse swiftness from Genesis to Revelation, as though it were the *quantity* and not the *quality* of Holy Writ, as though it were the mere *sound* and not the *sense* of Scripture, by which the controversy is to be determined,—that I am bound, minutely to examine and confute every single text which he may produce, and thus, you perceive, occupy the whole time allowed me for the defence of what I believe to be divine truth,—or, if I pass by a single passage without examination, I must thereupon acknowledge myself to be defeated in the argument! I say, it is a very pleasant thing for my opponent to tell me this; and, no doubt, if he could induce me to submit to it, he would then have me completely in his own power, to conduct me, as it were, in his own leading strings, wheresoever he pleased. He would then only have to quote text upon text without limits,—(which the poorest controversialist may do endlessly on almost any subject,)—and whether I saw much evidence, or little evidence, *or no evidence at all*, in those texts of Scripture, I should be obliged, at his bidding, minutely to examine them all, and thereby preclude myself from all opportunity of discussing that

which I may happen to know is the real evidence, by which the question will be ultimately decided, in the mind of every person who can discern the difference between sound and sense. But I beg leave to decline being *led* exactly in this way by my own antagonist. If I deal with this great and serious argument in any respect dishonestly, or disingenuously, you, my Christian friends, are not so dull but you can perceive it: and certain it is, that the great majority of you are not so prejudiced in my favour, as that you would be likely to overlook such a circumstance. If I deal with the argument unfairly, therefore, it is my own cause, and not the opposite cause, which will suffer from my conduct. But I have been long enough acquainted with this controversy, to know the difference between that class of Scriptural evidences, which have *some* weight in them, and which do affect the minds of serious and thinking people,—and that other class of arguments, which it is easy for a dexterous controversialist to bring together from all quarters, in order to raise a mere cloud of words and texts wherewith to blind the eyes of those who are called to judge upon the subject. I say that I know the difference between those two classes of Scriptural arguments. For the latter class alone I care little or nothing, because I know their worth; I know that they never yet have produced, and never will produce, conviction, in the mind of any unprejudiced person. They are the mere tools with which popular controversialists do their work. In respect to arguments of this class, therefore, I shall examine such a number of them, or rather *so many of each kind*, as I think may be necessary to shew you the real nature of the evidence which is thought to exist in them; and when I have done this, I shall leave all other arguments *of the same kind* to share the fate of their fellows. But when I find that arguments are produced,—and I acknowledge that several such have been produced by my opponent in his late discourses,—which have some real weight in them, and which I know do affect the minds of honest, impartial, inquirers,—these I will particularly examine, and give you my full opinion of their meaning. But especially, wherever I have been charged, in reference to my former arguments, with having given you ignorant and false representations of matters of fact, with which I confess that I ought to have been acquainted, before I stood up here to discuss a great question of religious truth,—in every such case, I will directly meet the charge, and I will either confute it by the most indubitable evidence, or I will freely acknowledge my error. Understand me rightly on this point. I am not going to trouble you with any defence of myself against mere general accusations of ignorance and incapacity. Whether I am justly liable to such accusations or not, is a question on which I neither desire nor expect you to feel the slightest concern. All which I mean to say is, that where any *specific* charge of ignorance or misrepresentation, in my former statements, has been brought against

me, every such instance I will directly meet and examine, and I will either confute the charge, or acknowledge the error. Thus much I feel is owing to you, who may have placed any reliance on my statements; and, above all, it is due to the sacred importance of that divine truth which I stand up here to advocate.

In this manner, then, I will hereafter proceed to reply to the last four discourses of my reverend opponent, as far as time will permit. But first, in the present Lecture, I shall occupy your attention, chiefly, with an examination of this remarkable passage, the Introduction of the Gospel according to John. I will discuss this passage fully. I will tell you all that I know, and all that I think about it, instead of going into a minute scrutiny of a hundred feeble and irrelevant texts. I will do so on this principle, that my object has been, from the beginning of this controversy, not to seem to gain a personal triumph over my opponent, but to avail myself of this opportunity of assisting, if possible, those who are seriously inclined to search for the truth. If I can, in the least degree, promote a spirit of free, serious, unprejudiced inquiry on this subject,—I shall then be amply satisfied; I shall feel that I have my reward;—and whether I, or my opponent, may appear to have personally the advantage in this present controversy, I shall care as little as I care for the dust upon my feet.

You have been told, that in my former brief observations on this Introduction to John's Gospel, I manifested such a degree of ignorance of the Greek language, as would have disgraced a schoolboy of twelve years old. I ought to have known, you have been told, that the Greek term (*λογος*) *Logos*, which is used here, does not mean *wisdom*; but that (*σοφία*) *Sophia*, is the term that signifies *wisdom*, and that *Logos* means *Word*, as it is here translated. Now I happen to know all this full well; because, as my reverend opponent says, this first chapter of John is the earliest lesson commonly given to a schoolboy when he begins to learn Greek. But I beg leave to say, that I never asserted that the term *Logos* in itself properly signifies *wisdom*. I never found fault with the common *translation* in this place. I admit that the translation is correct; I think that no other English rendering could be well substituted. What I did say was this,—that the *subject*, of which the Apostle is here treating, under the peculiar denomination of the *Word*, that this *subject* is the *wisdom*, or rather, “the operating power and wisdom of God.” Every person acquainted with such matters will see, that there is a great difference between the assertion which I actually made, and that which is ascribed to me by my opponent. The one assertion, I grant, if I had made it, might have shewn my ignorance; the other I hope to prove to you is perfectly correct. You have also been told, that the reason why I declined entering more at large into the consideration of this passage, in my former Lectures, was because

I felt conscious of my inability to reconcile it with my doctrines, and that I merely wished to see if my opponent would "leave me a loophole to creep through." This is not the only instance in which such jeering remarks have been thrown out. I care nothing for them. But my friends, if I thought myself justified in taking up your time with such idle talk, why might I not as well say, that instead of a mere "loophole to creep through," he has left a broad archway, through which I mean to ride in triumph, with a long train of Scriptural proofs to swell the pomp of my procession, and to lead him as a vanquished foe at my chariot wheels. I grant that it would be *egregious nonsense* to talk so; but wherein would my vapouring be worse than his scoffing? I have no wish whatever to indulge in any such observations. We come here for more serious purposes. Let us proceed at once to an examination of this passage of Scripture.

I will first state to you the main features of the two interpretations; and then consider the evidence by which they are respectively supported. The Trinitarian believes, that the *Word* here means our Lord Jesus Christ personally; that it is his proper name or title, as the second person of the Godhead; and therefore that it is here most distinctly and emphatically declared that our Lord Jesus Christ is God. The interpretation which I adopt, as a Unitarian, is, that the *Word* here does not signify our Lord Jesus Christ, but that it was a term employed in the times of the Evangelist, and in writings with which he must have been familiar, to signify "the operating power and wisdom of God," or God himself as *manifested* to men in his works and ways. These, in the main, are the two opposite interpretations. Let us now examine the evidence by which they are thought to be supported.

First, then, it is necessary for me to shew that this expression, the *Word*, is not a proper name, or a fixed and distinguishing title of Jesus Christ, in other parts of Scripture, in such a manner as that, when we meet with it here, we are bound in reason and consistency to understand at once that it means Jesus Christ. It is necessary for me to shew this; otherwise the Trinitarian may seem to have a great advantage in this respect, to which I am persuaded that he is not entitled. If, for instance, it were plainly written in this place, that our Lord Jesus Christ was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God, there would then be little or no room for dispute. Whatever we might even then suppose to be the entire meaning of the sacred writer, we should certainly know that he meant to assert something concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, personally considered. But I deny, that the *Word* is in this manner a settled name or title of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures. The evidence that has been produced for this opinion seems to me extremely fallacious. I will briefly examine it. The commencement of the Gospel according to

Luke has been appealed to for this purpose:—"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and *ministers of the word*." It has been thought that by the "word," here, is meant Jesus Christ, because the Apostles or first disciples are here called "ministers of the word." But it may just as well mean, what it must be allowed that the expression does most commonly mean in the Scriptures,—namely, the *doctrine* of Christ, or the *gospel*. I perhaps ought to have mentioned this circumstance before. It should be remembered, that this expression, *Logos*, which is here translated *word*, occurs very frequently in the New Testament,—perhaps several hundred times; and that, with the exception of four or five instances at the utmost, it confessedly does not mean Jesus Christ; but either it means any *saying*, or *discourse*, or it means, the discourse of Jesus Christ in particular, his *doctrine*, his teaching, his heavenly instruction, his *gospel*. For example, when we read that the Apostles "preached the word," and that their converts "heard the word," and "received the word," we understand the expression in this sense. It may surely have this meaning then, in this passage of Luke; for the Apostles were *ministers* of the doctrine or *word* of Christ. We commonly speak at this day of "the ministers of the gospel." I find this, in fact, to be the sense in which the passage is taken by many of the best commentators; and there is another passage in the same Evangelist, which appears to settle the meaning beyond all reasonable dispute. It is in the beginning of the 6th chap. of the Acts of the Apostles, (v. 3, 4:) "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business,"—the distribution of daily alms to the poor widows,—"but we will give ourselves continually [to prayer, and to the *ministry of the word*." This undoubtedly means the preaching of the gospel.

Another supposed instance of the use of this expression, "the *Word*," for Jesus Christ personally, is found in the beginning of the 1st Epistle of John:—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." It might here be observed that "Word of life," is a different expression from "Word" simply, and may have a different meaning. I am decidedly of opinion, however, that "Word of life" in this place does not signify Jesus Christ personally, but the *gospel*, or *doctrine*, of Jesus Christ. It will be admitted by every competent judge, that the translation of the passage in our common version is not perfectly correct. It is not properly "*of the word of life*." It is not in what we call the *genitive*, or possessive *case*; but there is a distinct *preposition* used by the Apostle, which signifies

“about,” “relating to,” “concerning.” The proper rendering of the passage therefore would be, “That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, *concerning* the word of life,” or, “relating to the word of life.” This at once alters the character of the passage, and it becomes evident that “the word of life” may mean, as “the word” commonly does mean, the *gospel*. How shall we determine in which sense to understand the expression? We should look to the only other passage in which the same expression occurs in the Scriptures, and see what it means there. We find it in the 2nd ch. of the Epistle to the Phillipians, v. 15, 16: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth *the word of life*; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.” Here it is too evident to admit of a doubt, that “the word of life” means, not Jesus Christ personally, but the gospel or doctrine of Jesus Christ.

The next passage to be examined, is in the 19th ch. and 13th v. of the Apocalypse. “And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called, The Word of God.” This is a real instance, and I believe the only real instance, in which Jesus Christ personally is denominated the Word, or rather, the Word of God. Now it is to be observed again, that this expression, “the word of God,” occurs between forty and fifty times in the New Testament, and always means the gospel, or doctrine of Christ. This, of itself, surely renders it improbable, that the expression should likewise be a proper name or title of Jesus Christ himself. But this circumstance, you will perceive, does not make it at all improbable, that the expression should be once or twice applied to Christ *descriptively*; not as a proper and permanent name, but only for the occasion, to describe his office and character, as the Revealer of that which is properly the “word of God,” namely, the gospel. I will endeavour to illustrate my meaning by a parallel instance. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 1, v. 18, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is *the power of God*.” Here the preaching of the cross, or the doctrine of the gospel, is called the *power of God*. Now, in the 24th v. the writer applies the same expression to Jesus Christ personally:—“Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the *power of God*, and the wisdom of God.” Does it follow from this, that the expression “Power of God” becomes henceforth a proper name of Christ, so that wherever it occurs we are bound to understand that it means Jesus Christ personally? By no means; nor has such an inference ever been drawn. He is here once called “the power of God,” *descriptively*, because the gospel is so called, and he was the Revealer of the gospel. In the same manner then precisely, he is once denominated the

“Word of God,” which is also a common designation of his gospel. It does not follow from this, that either the simple expression “the word,” or, “the word of God,” becomes henceforth a settled title of Jesus Christ, or that it is elsewhere ever applied to him.

There is indeed one clear instance in the Scriptures, as they stand in our common version, which, if it were genuine Scripture, would be directly to the Trinitarian’s purpose in this argument. It is in the 5th ch. and 7th v. of the 1st Epistle of John:—“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” Here there can be no doubt, that Jesus Christ himself is called the *Word*, and that he is so denominated in his personal distinction, and in reference to his divine nature, as the second person in the Godhead. But every man in the slightest degree acquainted with these subjects knows, that this is not genuine Scripture. There is no occasion for me to support this assertion by evidence, because the truth of it is so notorious. My reverend opponent has never alluded to this passage; nor could he do so, as an honest reasoner and a scholar, being fully aware, as he must be, that the proof of its spuriousness is so overwhelming as to compel even Trinitarian critics to abandon and condemn it, almost without an exception. This passage therefore must be entirely set aside; but I cannot set it aside without making one observation upon it. You see here, in a passage of confessedly later date than the genuine Scriptures, in a passage undoubtedly written by a Trinitarian, in what manner Christ is denominated the Word, as the second person in the Godhead. Now, if the Apostles were Trinitarians, if they entertained the same views of the person of Christ, how is it to be accounted for, that no such passage is to be found in their genuine writings? Every reader must draw his own inference from these premises.

I conclude therefore, on these grounds, that this expression, “the Word,” is not a proper Scriptural name or title of Jesus Christ, so as to preclude all further research on the subject. The field is still open for inquiry. We are bound to ascertain, from the best sources of knowledge within our reach, what the Evangelist probably meant by “the Word,” in this Introduction to his Gospel. Now, I am free to acknowledge that I understand the expression here, (as I have clearly shown you that the Trinitarian likewise does,) in a somewhat different sense from that which it commonly bears in the Scriptures. In this respect we are upon an equal footing. The difference between us I conceive to be this:—the Trinitarian here gives a sense to this expression which is entirely arbitrary, which in fact is drawn out of his own doctrine, and presupposes the truth of that doctrine; whereas I understand the expression in a sense which I will endeavour to shew, by independent evidence, must have been familiarly known to the Apostle when he wrote his

Gospel. It is useless, as appears to me, to seek for light on this subject in the phraseology of Gentile or Philosophical writers, with which we are not certain that the Apostle was acquainted. We must search those writings, and consider those modes of speech, which we are sure were known to this Evangelist, as a Christian and a Jew.

First, then, we may consult the Canonical Books of the Old Testament. We shall there find that it is a general, prevailing form of expression, *that God does all things by his word, or by a word*. Even where this precise term does not occur, (though I will shew you that it does occur frequently), yet, in fact, the same idea of the mode of the divine operation is oftentimes presented. God performs all his wondrous works by a *word*, by a command. For instance, in the original account of the creation, we read that "God *said*, Let there be light, and there was light;" and "God *said*, Let the earth bring forth grass, and the earth brought forth grass." Thus all things were originally brought into existence through the *word* of God. We find the same language employed respecting many miracles and extraordinary works of providence. In describing the wonders of God in Egypt, (Psalm 105, v. 34), the Psalmist says, "He *spake*, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number." This phraseology, in fact, is very common in the Psalms. "He *spake*, and it was done, he *commanded*, and it stood fast," (Psalm 33, v. 9.) "By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," (Psalm 33, v. 6.) This passage shews what we are to understand by "the *word* of the Lord," in such connections,—that it means, not any distinct person, but literally a *word*, or audible voice;—for it is expressed in the second and parallel clause of the sentence, by "the breath of his mouth." Again, "He sendeth forth his *commandment* upon earth, his *word* runneth very swiftly." (Psalm 147, v. 15.) Here we see that the Word of God is personified, as I shall contend that it is in the Introduction of John's Gospel; the personal action of running very swiftly is here ascribed to the Word. You clearly perceive, then, from these examples, that it is the common phraseology of the old Testament, that all the divine works are wrought by the *word* of God.

Now, there can be little doubt, that at first this expression was understood by the Jews almost or quite literally. In their rude state of mind, when they were first delivered from Egypt, they would be likely to understand that all these wonders were performed, literally, by the word or voice of God. But when the minds of this chosen people became expanded, and their views of the nature and ways of God more refined, they would necessarily discern that this was but a figurative mode of expression; that no mere *word* could have produced the creation; but that in truth it was by the mind of God, by the will and intelligence of God, by the operating power and wisdom of God, that the

creation was really effected. In this way, as the views of the Israelites concerning the works and ways of God became more intellectual and more spiritual, they would naturally come to attach a more refined and spiritual sense to this expression, "the Word." It appears to me, that we have a striking proof of this change in the apprehensions of the Jews concerning the *spirit* of God, (which is very much the same thing as the *word* of God), in a passage which I have already quoted from the Psalms. We find that the creation is first ascribed to the *word* of God; and immediately afterwards, in the parallel clause, it is ascribed to the *breath* of his mouth. Both expressions were probably at first taken almost literally. But the *breath* of God is the *spirit* of God; in the original Scriptures the very same word which means *breath*, or wind, also means *spirit*. Now, we are quite certain, that the Jews in the time of our Saviour understood by the *spirit* of God, not literally the *breath* of God's mouth, but his invisible, omnipotent energy, operating upon his works and creatures. In short, the minds of the Israelites had then undergone that very change in regard to the *spirit* of God, which I now suppose them to have undergone in their conceptions of the *word* of God. I will tell you what appears to me to be the plain and the whole truth of the matter; though I cannot here enter into a consideration of all the evidence by which my opinion might be supported. It appears to me, that the *word*, or the word of God, meant precisely the same thing as the *spirit*, or the spirit of God; the only difference was, that the former term, *λογος*, *word*, had grown into use amongst the Hellenistic Jews, as they were termed, the Jews who lived out of Palestine, in Greek cities, and employed the Greek language; whilst the latter term, *πνευμα*, *breath*, or *spirit*, had been retained by the Jews of Palestine. This opinion is confirmed by various circumstances relating to this Gospel of John. There is good reason to believe that this Apostle passed the latter portion of his days, and wrote his Gospel, out of Palestine, amongst the Hellenistic Jews. He would be very likely, therefore, in the introduction of his narrative, to adopt a mode of expression familiar and agreeable to those with whom he was living. But when he comes, in the narrative itself, to relate the actual discourses of Jesus Christ, which were delivered to the Jews of Palestine, he would then, as naturally, drop the use of the term *Word*, and employ the equivalent term *Spirit*, which we find to be the case in all the subsequent parts of his Gospel.

We cannot reasonably expect to find many instances of this more refined understanding of the expression, "the Word," in the Canonical books of the Old Testament; because the latest of those books was probably written more than four hundred years before the time of our Saviour, and consequently before the conceptions of the Jews, respecting the *Word* of God, had completely undergone the change which I have

stated. But there are other Jewish writings, which being of a much later date, indeed shortly before the time of our Saviour, may be expected to afford us more of this kind of evidence. I allude to the Apocryphal writings of the Jews, and especially that remarkable production, entitled the "Wisdom of Solomon." This, you know, was not written by Solomon, nor in his days; it is generally thought to have been written by some Hellenistic Jew, a few years before the advent of Christ. We possess it only in the Greek language; and it probably never existed in the Hebrew. Now, in this book we meet with frequent and bold personifications of the *Word* of God. In the 16th chap. 16th verse, we read, "That thy children, O Lord, whom thou lovest, might know, that it is not the growth of fruits that nourisheth man; but it is thy *word* which preserveth them that put their trust in thee." Here we perceive that the works of Providence, which we know to be really the effects of God's power and wisdom, are distinctly ascribed to the *word*. The *word* is here also in some measure personified, since it is said to "preserve" men. Again, in chap. 9, v. 12, "O God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things with thy *word*, and ordained man through thy wisdom." Here likewise the work of creation is ascribed to the *word*, as it is in the Gospel; and its meaning is here explained, in the parallel clause, to signify the wisdom of God. We have next a most sublime and poetical passage respecting the Word. It is well worthy of your attention for its own intrinsic beauty, independent of the light which it casts on the question we are at present discussing. The writer is speaking of the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians,—and he says, (chap. 18, v. 14, 15, 16.) "For while all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, thine Almighty *Word* leapt down from heaven, out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death, and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth."

It cannot with any truth be said, that such personifications of the attributes of God were entirely unknown to the Jews. You must all remember the very striking instance of this kind of personification, which occurs in the 8th chapter of the Book of Proverbs. The *Wisdom* of God, (which in fact is very much the same thing as the Word of God), is there boldly personified, and similar acts and qualities are ascribed to it, as in this Introduction to John's Gospel are ascribed to the *Word*. "The Lord possessed me, *Wisdom*, in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," (verses 22, 23.) "When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always

before him." (verses 27 and 30.) They who could thus personify the divine Wisdom, might surely personify the divine Word, which is but the operating power and wisdom of God, as manifested in creation and providence.

It must needs be allowed, however, that we can form no adequate conception of the ideas which the Jews attached to this expression, by merely consulting the original books of the Old Testament, nor even from the Apocrypha. The reason is this; that in the time of our Saviour, the Jews did not familiarly employ the pure Hebrew, in which the books of the Old Testament are written. I do not mean that they did not understand this language; but they had lost the familiar use of it, during their captivity in Babylon; and they now used a mixed dialect, which is called the Chaldee. Into this dialect the books of the Old Testament had been translated, or rather, they had been freely paraphrased, for the benefit of the Jews, as is generally thought, before the time of Christ. This Chaldee paraphrase may have been to the Jews of our Lord's day very much what the common English version of the Bible is to us in the present day. Now, in this Chaldee paraphrase, we meet with frequent mention of "the word of God," signifying the operating power and wisdom of God, the mind of God, or God himself. I am about to read to you an extract on this subject, from the writings of the learned Bishop Pearson. And this gives me an opportunity of noticing some remarks which have lately been made upon my conduct, in appealing to such testimonies, on points of learning and matters of fact. In my previous Lectures, I have quoted the sentiments of such men as Martin Luther, Calvin, Bishop Lowth, Erasmus, Grotius, and others,—not, I call you to witness, not as being of any ultimate authority on questions of religious faith,—but only as authorities respecting the sense of a word, or an expression, or some peculiar phraseology of the Scriptures. What says my reverend opponent to all this? Why he says, forsooth, that he cares nothing for the opinions of great men; he cares nothing for human wisdom or human learning, (though you must have observed that he makes a free use of his own learning, whenever he thinks he can thereby support his argument,) he casts all such authorities aside, he "throws them all overboard," and he is guided by the Bible alone. My brethren, do you not see the real object of all this declamation? You know, and my reverend opponent knows, that we all profess to be guided by the Bible in the formation of our religious opinions. The question between us is, not concerning the authority of the Bible, on which we are all agreed, but concerning the *meaning* of the Bible; and when this is the simple question in dispute, I do think that it might not be altogether beneath even our dignity, wise and learned as we doubtless are, to avail ourselves of the assistance of men who spent their entire lives in the

laborious study of the Bible. Let me endeavour to illustrate this by a similar instance. Let us suppose that two country attorneys, in their zeal for their respective clients, differ respecting the sense of a particular word, or a particular clause, in a certain Act of Parliament. Some renowned Counsel, learned in the Law, is applied to for his opinion on this particular point; perhaps a second and a third authority is consulted, and they all agree in delivering the same opinion. Thus, one of the contending parties obtains an opinion entirely in accordance with his own judgment. But when he presents this opinion to the attention of the other party, he immediately turns round upon him, and exclaims, "Oh! I care nothing for your learned authorities, I treat them all with perfect contempt, 'I throw them all overboard,' I am guided in my practice by the Law, the Law is my only authority." Would not this be considered strangely nonsensical? Would not every one perceive that it was a mere subterfuge to escape the force of that which could not be otherwise answered? We must all abide by the Law; the only question relates to the true *meaning* of the Law. I say the same thing with regard to the Bible. This also is *my* sole authority in matters of faith. My only object is, to ascertain the true *meaning* of the Bible; and to this end, I have no objection to avail myself of whatever help I can obtain, from the labours of pious and learned men of all Churches; neither do I think that you will have any such objection; and therefore I shall continue the practice of quoting such authorities, whenever it shall appear to me useful. Yes! my reverend opponent may cast all such authorities overboard, if he pleases, whenever their testimony is against him; but being thrown overboard they will not sink, they will float down the stream of their own immortal reputation, and shine as lights to guide the serious and sober-minded inquirer in his search for truth, long after all empty declamation, and all the arts of a popular rhetoric, and a still more *popular* logic, are buried for ever in the fathomless depths of oblivion.

I will now read to you the opinion of Bishop Pearson respecting the sense of this expression, "the Word," in the Chaldee paraphrase of the Jews.

"I conceive this Chaldee paraphrase to represent the sense of the Jews of that age, as being their public interpretation of the Scripture. Wherefore what we find common and frequent in it, we cannot but think the vulgar and general opinion of that nation. Now it is certain that this paraphrast does use the *word of God* for *God* himself; and that especially with relation to the creation of the world. As Isaiah 45, v. 12, I made the earth and created man upon it saith the Lord; which the Chaldee translateth, *I by my word* made the earth and created man upon it; chap. 48 v. 13, *My hand also founded the earth*: the Chaldee, *by my word* also I founded the earth. And

most clearly, Genesis 1, v. 27, *And God created man*: the Jerusalem Targum, *the word of the Lord* created man. And Genesis 3, v. 8, *They heard the voice of the Lord God*: the Chaldee paraphrase, *They heard the voice of the word of the Lord God.*"

There are some examples, in this Chaldee paraphrase, of the use of this expression in reference to other persons besides God, and plainly in the same sense.

"In the Targum on Numbers 15, v. 32, the paraphrast renders the text thus; a certain man said *in his word* I will go forth and gather sticks on the sabbath day; that is, said *within himself*. Again on Ecclesiastes 1, v. 13, Solomon said *in his word*, vanity of vanities is this whole world; *in his word*, that is *in himself*."

I have now shown you, from sources which no man can deny to have been well known to the Evangelist, in what sense he would be likely to employ this controverted expression. Let me now proceed to apply these facts to the interpretation of the passage under review.

"In the beginning was the Word." This idea the Evangelist repeats, in the second verse:—"The same was in the beginning with God." It is of no consequence, in regard to my interpretation, whether we understand by "in the beginning," from all eternity, or, before the creation of all visible things, or in what sense soever we understand it. It is clear that the *Word*, in the sense already explained, as signifying the power and wisdom by which God operates upon his works and manifests himself to his creatures, this *Word* was in the beginning; it is eternal. This, in fact, is the same proposition, the same sentiment, as we meet with in that fine passage of the Proverbs, to which I have before directed your attention. *Wisdom* is there said to have been "in the beginning," "from everlasting," "or ever the earth was."

The Evangelist likewise affirms, that "the Word was with God;" and in the sense in which I understand the phrase, it is plain that the Word must have been always with God, being an inseparable portion, as it were, of his own eternal nature. God is the uncreated fountain of all power and wisdom; and all things which are the effects of power and wisdom, have their origin from Him. This also is the same thing which is affirmed of Wisdom as personified in the Book of Proverbs:—"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways;" "I was by him, as one brought up *with him*; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." The Evangelist at length declares that the "Word was God," or, "God was the Word;" for it may fairly be translated either way; indeed, it is a curious fact, that the latter rendering was adopted in the older version of the Bible in the time of Henry VIII., and by Martin Luther in his German version. But the two propositions, on the principle of my interpretation, are perfectly

identical, "God was the Word," or, "the Word was God." Now, I contend that the Evangelist here distinctly affirms the Unitarian doctrine. Taking the term *God* in the sense in which it is commonly, nay, uniformly employed throughout the Scriptures, to signify the one Almighty Being who was the God of the Jews, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I maintain that the Apostle here strikes at the root of the Trinitarian error; for he declares that the Word, so far as it is to be considered a real Person, is that one God himself. Having first personified the Word, as I have shewn you is done in other parts of Scripture, he now,—as though on purpose to guard against the idea of any *plurality* of divine persons,—affirms that the Word was God, the only true God himself.

We are next informed (v. 3) that "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;" or, "all things were made by *it*, and without *it* was not anything made;" for either translation is equally allowable, so far as the original Greek is concerned; and it is again a curious fact, that all our earlier English translations have it in the latter way. The pronoun in the original is, indeed, necessarily masculine, because both (*λογος*) Word, and (*θεος*) God, are of the masculine gender; and therefore we cannot determine with certainty to which the pronoun refers. I am disposed to think that it refers to the Word, because the preposition which the Evangelist employs, when he says "all things were made *by* it," is one which properly signifies *instrumentality*. But this again is of no consequence, in regard to the defence of the Unitarian interpretation. The Word, so far as it means a real Person, is God himself; and therefore whether we read by *it* or by *him*, it is equally plain and true that all things were made by the Word. I find that some observations have been made on this verse, tending to shew that it is proper creation which is here spoken of. I do not know with whom my reverend opponent thought himself to be arguing, when he made these observations. Certainly not with me; for I have never denied that it is proper creation of which the Evangelist is here treating.

We next read that "in *him*," (or "in *it*," for again the reference of the pronoun is ambiguous), but let us read, if you please, "In *him* was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." It is uncertain, whether by the life, and the light of men, the Evangelist means that life-giving truth and energy, which originally dwelt in God and was manifest to the world through Jesus Christ, or whether he means Jesus Christ himself. I believe that Unitarians in general understand it in the former sense, but Trinitarians in the latter, although, as I will presently shew, this gives a meaning which is utterly inconsistent with their own doctrines. I am inclined, however, to

agree with the Trinitarian so far,—that the Evangelist may mean our Lord Jesus Christ himself. This is rendered probable by the verses which immediately follow, where the writer says that John the Baptist was not the true light, but “was sent to bear witness of that light.” Now we know that John the Baptist came to bear witness to our Lord Jesus Christ, personally considered. We know also that in other parts of this same Gospel, our Saviour is denominated “the life,” and “the light of the world.” I am inclined therefore to believe, though the point is uncertain, that the Evangelist does here mean our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Understanding the passage in this sense, then, I contend again that the Evangelist here directly contradicts the Trinitarian, and confirms the Unitarian doctrine. If the Life, the Light of men, means Jesus Christ, it is plain that the Word cannot mean Jesus Christ. And why not? Because the Life, the Light of men, is here expressly said to have been *in* the Word; and in what possible sense could any person be said to be in himself? There would be no conceivable meaning in such an expression. I think the Evangelist means that the Word, or God, (for they are identical,) and Jesus Christ were *united*; that there was an intimate spiritual union existing between them. If you ask me why I so understand the passage, it is because I find that such is the meaning intended to be conveyed by this same Evangelist, in other parts of his writings, where he employs the same mode of expression. For example, he represents our Saviour as saying to his disciples, (ch. 15, v. 5) “Abide *in me*, and I *in you*; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide *in me*,” and again, in his first Epistle, ch. 2, v. 24, he says that all true disciples are “in the Son, and in the Father.” This is universally understood to mean, that they are morally and spiritually in union with the Son and with the Father, by faith and love. When therefore it is said, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of men, was *in* the Word, or *in* God, I understand it to mean that Christ and God were in a peculiar manner spiritually united, or that the Word, the operating power and wisdom of God, dwelt in Jesus Christ. And this I take to be the plain Scriptural doctrine concerning our Saviour.

The verses immediately following scarcely require any remark. The Evangelist simply relates, that John the Baptist came to bear witness to Jesus, who was the true Christ. “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

We read, in the tenth verse, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” Who is meant by the pronoun “*He*?” Does it mean the

person mentioned in the previous verses under the name of the Light, or does it refer back to the first four verses, and mean the Word, or God? The original Greek does not immediately determine this question? There is nothing answering to the English pronoun "*He*," but the nominative to the verb is left to be supplied; and looking only to the first part of the verse, we might supply it by either the Light, or the Word, or God. But when I look forward to the end of the verse, I see that it is no longer doubtful; for there the pronoun is used in the original, as in the English, where it is said, "the world knew *him* not;" and the pronoun is in the masculine gender, clearly shewing that it does not refer to the Light, which in the original is neuter, but either to the Word, or to God, which in the original are both masculine. I therefore take the passage, from the sixth to the ninth verses inclusive, to be parenthetical. The Evangelist having spoken of Jesus in the fourth and fifth verses, as being in spiritual union with the Word, or with God, and as being thereby constituted the Life and the Light of men, turns aside for a moment, to distinguish between this true Christ and John the Baptist. Some ecclesiastical writers account for this by the fact, that there were persons in that age who were inclined to follow John the Baptist rather than Jesus. But the Evangelist, having condemned this error, returns to the subject of which he was treating, and says, that "*He*," God himself, or the Word, which is the operating power and wisdom of God, "was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." The expression employed in the original most commonly signifies the *world of mankind*; and the Evangelist probably alludes to the heathen world, who knew not the true God, though his power and wisdom were ever manifested among them.

It is said in the next place, that "*He* came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." All this, I think, plainly relates to the dealings of God with the people of Israel. They are often denominated his own chosen people, and he came unto them by especial manifestations of his power, wisdom and goodness. Many of them did not receive him, piously and submissively; for they are often represented as a rebellious people against the Lord their God. But to as many as did thus receive him, he gave the happy privilege of being regarded and treated as his peculiar children; and they are called, in the Old Testament, "sons of God."

The Evangelist proceeds, in the fourteenth verse, to speak of the redemption of the whole world, by the power and wisdom of God so gloriously manifested through the man Christ Jesus. In this way of interpreting the passage, you see that there is a clear and beautiful connexion in all

which the Evangelist here delivers. He first speaks of the Word as having been in the beginning, from all eternity, with God, and as being, in fact, the spirit or mind of God himself; then, as having been exercised in the stupendous work of creation; then, as having been long manifested to all the world of mankind, who were its workmanship, and who too commonly knew not God, though he was ever in the midst of them; then, as having been in a particular manner displayed to the chosen people of Israel; and finally, as being conspicuously manifested in the true Christ, the man whom God had ordained to be the Saviour and judge of the world.

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” By *flesh*, in the Scriptures, is meant humanity, human nature, or a human being, as when the Apostle Paul says, that “by the law can no flesh be justified;” that is, no human being. The declaration of the Evangelist in this place, therefore, is, that the operating power and wisdom of God in some sense became a human being, in the person of Jesus Christ. Now, I am not concerned, as against the Trinitarian, to shew in what precise sense this assertion is to be understood. No believers, not Trinitarians more than others, understand it in a perfectly literal sense: it were absurd and impious. Perhaps some may understand it in too high, and some in too low a sense; but this is entirely a matter of opinion and personal feeling, in which every man must judge for himself. I certainly believe that the Word of God, or God himself, was united to the man Christ Jesus, in a peculiar, spiritual, and mysterious manner, such as was never approached by any other human being. But this is a question which does not come within the present controversy. All which I am concerned to prove, as against the Trinitarian, is, that whatever be meant by “the Word becoming flesh,” the Word does not signify any second person of the Godhead, but God himself, even the Father, the only true God. In short, I do not deny, you will observe, that the Word was eternal; I do not deny that the Word was God; I do not deny that all things were made by the Word; I do not deny that the Word became flesh; I do not deny any thing which the sacred writer here affirms. I only deny that strange, unwarrantable inference, which you draw from his language, that momentous addition which you make to his teaching,—namely, that the Word means some *second* divine person.

The Evangelist then says, “and we beheld his glory,” (that is, I apprehend, the glory of this flesh, this human person, to whom the Word was united,) “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,” (or rather, as the original would be more correctly rendered), “glory as of an only begotten son from his Father, full of grace and truth.”

I have now, my brethren, laid before you that which, as a Unitarian, I humbly conceive to be the true meaning of this sublime passage of Scripture. Permit me to direct your attention, for a moment, to the great moral beauty and value of the passage, when so interpreted. There is here nothing, you perceive, to obscure the great principle of the Unity of God; nothing to confuse our ideas of that fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only true God; nothing to distract our thoughts and feelings with the contemplation of two divine persons, whilst we are solemnly charged to acknowledge and worship only one God. But I maintain that there is in this passage, as we understand it, every thing calculated to inspire our hearts with fervent adoration and gratitude towards the Father of mercies; every thing to fill us with reverence and love towards the Lord Jesus Christ; every thing to give us high and worthy conceptions of the glorious gospel of our Saviour. Consider what it is that is really taught here, according to our interpretation. It is, that the infinite, eternal Wisdom, which existed always with God, and was an unchangeable part of his own all-perfect nature, the Wisdom by which all things were made, and by which all things are sustained and governed,—this Wisdom in the fulness of times dwelt in, and was manifested through, the Lord Jesus Christ. It pleased the Father that in him the fulness of divine power and wisdom should dwell; and of his fulness did the Apostles receive; and so may we likewise if we be his faithful disciples. His doctrine was “the word.” He himself was the Word; for it was not merely by the teaching of Christ, but more especially by Christ himself, by his holy life and character, that such a glorious display of divine power and wisdom was made to the world. I ask you, my friends, whether this view of the passage, whilst it harmonizes with the rest of Scripture, and with every dictate of enlightened reason, does not set the Lord Jesus Christ before our minds in the most sublime, interesting, and affecting light? This, at all events, is the light in which Unitarian Christians do regard the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is for so regarding him, that we are represented as little better than infidels, and as persons who seek to dishonour our Redeemer! For his revered name’s sake we have long borne these reproaches; and I trust that we shall never suffer ourselves to be moved by them from the faith that we embrace, as the pure doctrine of the Scriptures.

I have trespassed on your attention, my brethren, even longer than I thought would be necessary on this subject. Suffer me now to occupy the short portion of time which remains, by commencing my observations on the late discourses of my reverend opponent.

In the first place, I find that he has accused me of having left some essential links of my argument wholly untouched. In particular, he says that I did not prove, as I was bound to

do, that the Father *alone* is God. It is acknowledged that if I had proved, not only that there is but one God, not only that the Father is God, but likewise that the Father *alone* is God, I should then have established my own doctrine, and have refuted the Trinitarian doctrine. But you have been told, that the latter proposition, namely, that the Father *alone* is God, I never so much as attempted to prove. Now, I ask you, my brethren, whether this assertion is true? Did I not attempt to prove that the Father *alone* is God? Whether I succeeded or not in my attempt, is quite another question, which you must each decide for yourselves; but did I not attempt it? Did I not argue this point, at length, from several distinct passages of Scripture in which the *Father* is declared to be "the only true God," and in which it is declared that "to us there is but one God, the *Father*?" Did I not endeavour to shew the fallacy of all those ingenious devices, by which the Trinitarian advocate labours to evade the testimony of these passages to the sole, exclusive deity of the *Father*? I certainly did so; and therefore I say that, when you heard it affirmed that I never so much as *attempted* to establish this essential point of my argument, you must have known that you were listening to a very incorrect and unfair statement of the facts.

In the next place, you have been told that I did not so much as attempt to prove, not merely that there is but one God, but also that God is but *one person*, that there is but one *person* who is God. Now I ask you again, whether this assertion is true? Did I not attempt to prove this point also? Did I not take for my text, in the third Lecture, the remarkable words of the first commandment, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord, is one?" Did I not endeavour to shew, from the sense in which the Jews always unquestionably understood this commandment, as it had been delivered by Moses; from the sense in which the Scribe evidently understood it when it was quoted and re-asserted by Jesus; from the approbation which Jesus expressed of the meaning which the Scribe attributed to his words; did I not argue on these grounds, that the plain, obvious meaning of this commandment is, that there is but one *person* who is God? But you have been reminded, that although Jesus did, in general terms, approve of the Scribe's answer, yet that he only said that he was "*not far* from the kingdom of God;" and you have been assured, that the deficiency of the Scribe consisted in his ignorance of the proper deity of Christ. I need not tell you, my brethren, that this is a perfectly gratuitous assumption; yet it is one, perhaps, of which I ought not to complain. It seems, then, on the authority of Christ himself, that a Unitarian may be *very near* the kingdom of God. This is more than the disciples of Christ, in these latter ages, have commonly been willing to allow. But on the subject of this objection, I must take leave to deny that it was at all my business, as a Unitarian, to prove affirmatively that God is but one

person, or that there is but one person who is God. It is very preposterous in the Trinitarian to give such an account of the state of the argument. What do we mean by the word *God*? Do we not mean a person, a living intelligent being, or person? When it is said therefore in Scripture, or elsewhere, that there is but one God, is it not the plain and obvious meaning of this declaration, that there is but one person in existence who is truly and properly God? Is not this the sense in which every man would first, and naturally, understand such a declaration. If it has any different meaning, therefore, is it not entirely the business of the Trinitarian to prove this by some indubitable evidence? Take any other name, or any other word, which necessarily signifies a person; the word *King* for example. When it is said that there is but one King, is it not the plain and obvious meaning of this assertion, that there is but one *person* on the face of the earth who is properly a King? I say again, that it is a complete perversion of the true state of the argument, for the Trinitarian to charge me with an essential omission, because I did not prove, affirmatively, that the one God is *one person*. It is entirely his own business to prove the contrary, if he thinks that the understandings of men will much longer receive such a palpable contradiction.

In the next place, you have been told that I have overlooked the all-important difference between three Gods, and three divine *persons*, three persons who are each truly and properly God. It appears that I ought to have paid especial attention to this difference. You are assured that there is a difference between three Gods and three divine persons, so great and so essential, that whilst the belief of the one would be the error of heathen polytheism and idolatry, the admission of the other is the only true Christian faith and worship. Now, when I first came to this statement of my reverend opponent, I confess that I began to feel a little elated. It was very foolish of me, because I had so often been deceived before in the same particular; but yet I did once more begin to hope, that we were at length approaching to a clear and free consideration of the real question in dispute. "Here," I said to myself, "is a positive assertion, that there is a most important difference between three Gods and three divine persons. Now, then, let us hear what the difference is." Alas! not one word, not one syllable, are we favoured with on this point! Do let me beseech you, my brethren, to consider how your understandings are dealt with in this matter. You are told that there is a difference between the belief of one proposition and the belief of another, so great, that whilst the one would be heathen polytheism, the other is the necessary foundation of all true religion; and yet you are not assisted in the slightest degree in comprehending how you are to distinguish between the one and the other. Is this just? Is it fair? As I stated to you in a former Lecture, I am not in the habit of saying that Trinitarians believe in three

Gods, because I know they deny and detest the charge. But suppose I were to say, what I can truly say as a Unitarian, that I see no difference whatever between three Gods, and three divine persons who are each truly and properly God. I am clear in my own convictions, that the popular doctrine of the Trinity either amounts to no meaning at all, or it amounts to absolute Tritheism. That they are one in being, or in essence, as you say, will not alter the case; unless you so explain this vague expression as to destroy their separate personality, which you must not do, for this would destroy your doctrine. However, I do not wish to set up my opinion on so serious a matter, as authority to which any other human being can be expected to bow down. I may be altogether in the dark on the subject; I am very willing to be better informed. You tell me that there is a great and most important difference. Do have the kindness to tell me precisely, or if that be impossible, as nearly as you can, in what this difference consists? Not one word, not one syllable of information on this point, can I obtain. This is not only treating me as a heretic very unkindly, since, if I could perceive the difference, perhaps I might abandon all my objections to the Trinity; but methinks it is treating you, my friends, who rest your hopes of salvation on the doctrine, very unceremoniously.

In the next place, my reverend opponent has examined the argument which I endeavoured to derive for the strict unity of God from the first commandment, as delivered in the 6th chap. and 4th v. of Deuteronomy. He says, that this was meant only as a declaration of there being but one God, in opposition to the polytheism or many gods of the heathen, and not in opposition to the supposed Christian doctrine of a plurality of divine persons. I am very willing to grant this; and I am willing to grant, moreover, that I cannot produce a single passage of Scripture, in which the present doctrine of the Trinity was meant expressly to be alluded to and condemned; for the plain reason, that no such doctrine made a part of any religion until long after the Scriptures were written. It is a strangely ridiculous demand which the Trinitarian makes upon me, when he calls upon me to produce any such passage. The Scriptures declare, simply and clearly, without reserve or explanation of any kind, that there is but one God, and that God is one. They set this forth as the first of all the commandments, the fundamental principle of all true religion. The inspired teachers, I grant, originally made this declaration in opposition to the polytheism of the heathen, in opposition to every notion which men had then acquired of a plurality of gods. It is entirely for you to shew, that this plain declaration of the Scriptures does not apply to your doctrine of three divine persons, as strongly as it applied to the polytheism of the ancient idolators. But when you came to that point, as we have just seen, you peremptorily decline the task; you say

there is a great difference, but you will not tell us what the difference is.

My reverend opponent, however, discovers even in this very commandment a distinct proof of a plurality of divine persons. This proof consists in the plural form of the Hebrew word, *Elohim*, which is here translated *God*. It is an old argument, my brethren, but it is an argument which I had thought was grown out of use amongst candid, intelligent Trinitarians. Certainly, the word is in the plural form; and perhaps it may be impossible to say why it is so. There are many things of this kind, the causes of which are hidden in the dark and remote origin of languages. Not only in the Hebrew, but in most or all other languages, there are certain words which are always found in the plural, though the objects to which they are applied are singular. Am I, from so trifling a circumstance as this, to infer so stupendous a doctrine, as that there are three divine persons, though the Scripture declares that there is but one God? Let me ask you, why our translators have not rendered this word into English in the plural form? Why do we not read, in the English version, "The Lord our *Gods* is one Lord?" Do you think that would be any improvement? Surely it ought to be so rendered, if in the original so important a doctrine as that of the Trinity was meant to be involved in this mode of expression. But our translators were wise and grave men; they knew the difference between a mere idiom of the Hebrew language, (which may be seized upon by a popular controversialist,) and the true, substantial *meaning* of the Holy Scriptures. I will take the liberty of reading to you, on this subject, the testimony of the learned Dr. Geddes. He was indeed a Roman Catholic divine; but as Catholics believe in the Trinity, as well as Protestants, I hope this circumstance will not be thought a fatal objection to his testimony. He says "Do the plural forms *Elohim*, and *Elohi*, denote a plurality of persons when applied to the one true God? No: not any more than *Adounim*, and *Adouni*, denote a plurality of lords, *Bouraim*, and *Bourai*, a plurality of Creators, *Penim* and *Peni*, a plurality of faces, or *Him*, a plurality of lives. It is truly strange that such a notion should ever have been entertained; and indeed it is only a modern notion, of the same age with scholastic theology. The Christian Fathers of the Church, who were eager enough to discover in the Old Testament proofs of a Trinity, never dreamed of seeking one in *Elohim*. The term *Elohim* is applied not only to the true God, but to false gods, and even to a single false god, whether male or female, such as *Baal*, *Dagon*, *Ashtaroth*, &c. It is applied to one Angel in Judges, xiii. v. 22, and to one man, Moses, Exodus iv. v. 16, and vii. v. 1. Nay the golden calf is called by Aaron himself *Elohi*. The plural number then is no proof of a Trinity of Gods or persons; and this is indeed allowed by the best commentators whether Catholic or Pro-

testant.”—(*Critical Remarks*, p. 8, as quoted in *Dr. Carpenter's Unitarianism*.)

But I turn to my Hebrew Grammar, and there I find the whole matter explained in the simplest manner. “Words that express dominion, dignity, majesty, are commonly plural; as *Elohim*, Gods,—*Adounim*, lords,—*Bolim*, husbands, masters;—though, at the same time, they may have a *verb*, noun, or affix, *singular*.”—(*Wilson's Hebrew Grammar*, p. 221.)

It appears, then, to be a simple idiom of the Hebrew language, that words expressive of greatness, dignity, and majesty, (as the name of God surely is), should be used in the plural number; and out of this simple idiom, my opponent would raise an argument for a plurality of persons in the Godhead. Now, it is not for me to say, that in arguing thus he has displayed gross *ignorance* of the commonest peculiarities of the Hebrew language. It would never do for *me* to talk so; you would not endure it from *me* for a moment. But I am satisfied with saying, that according to the judgment of the best Hebrew scholars and grammarians, my reverend opponent has fallen into a considerable mistake on this subject.*

I will next examine what has been said respecting the Unitarian argument from the 8th chap. and 6th v. of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. We are told, as far as I understand the statements which have been laid before me, that Jesus Christ is here denominated *Lord*; and that if I infer, because there is said to be “but one God, the Father,” that therefore the Father alone is God, to the exclusion of every other person, I ought in the same manner to infer, because there is said to be “one Lord Jesus Christ,” that therefore Jesus Christ alone is *Lord*, to the exclusion of every other person; and thereby, it is said, I shall exclude Jehovah himself, even the Father, from being considered as Lord. Now, my brethren, all this is the veriest play upon words that ever was practised. The plain fact is, that the English word *Lord*, in the Scriptures, and also the corresponding word of the Greek in the New Testament, stand for two totally different Hebrew words; one of which is יהוה *Jehovah*, the proper and peculiar name of the true God; the other is אדוני *Adouni*, which means simply a *lord*, that is, a ruler, master, head, or chief, and is applied constantly to human beings. It is in this latter sense, that Jesus Christ is commonly denominated *our Lord* in the Scriptures. I may mention a

* I took into the pulpit, but forgot to read, this extract from Professor Lee, of Cambridge:—“I am well aware that these and similar passages have been appealed to in support of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; but until it shall be made probable that the sacred writers did usually involve doctrines of this kind in the *mere forms* of words, I must be allowed to object to such methods of supporting an article of faith which stands in need of no such support. For similar usages in the Greek and Latin see Viger de idiotismis, Edit. 1813, p.p. 32, 46, &c. Clarke's Homer. Iliad E. line 778, note.”

circumstance, to prove the notoriety of these facts amongst learned men. In the Hebrew translation of the New Testament, made for the use of Jews, by one of the greatest Hebrew scholars in Europe, under the direction of the British and Foreign Bible Society, this distinction is uniformly observed; and the word *Lord*, as it occurs in the New Testament, is rendered back into one or the other of these very different Hebrew words, according as it applies to God or to Jesus Christ. I say therefore, that this argument is the veriest play upon words that ever was practised. In speaking of this passage of Scripture, however, my reverend opponent has referred me to the 55th page of his book, where he says that I shall find some critical arguments not suited to a popular audience. Now I am very ready to admit, that no man living knows the difference between a *popular* audience, and an audience of a different kind, better than my reverend opponent in this controversy. He has a remarkably fine discernment in this particular. Nevertheless, on referring to the 55th page of his book, I see nothing there which may not as well be brought before a popular audience, as many other things which he himself has advanced. I will therefore state to you the substance of his observations. He says that Christ must here be spoken of as God, because he is declared to be "the only Lord," in opposition to the lords of the heathen, who, (my opponent further says), must be included amongst false gods. I see no proof of this whatever; the Apostle rather seems to distinguish them, for he says there are "gods many, and lords many." Perhaps I cannot tell precisely who are meant by these "lords many;" but that is no reason why I should submit to the dictate of my opponent, who cannot shew me that he knows any better than I do what it means. Probably the Apostle alludes to those many inferior, secondary persons, in the heathen mythology, who without being themselves worshipped as gods, acted as ministers or agents between the gods and mankind; and the Apostle doubtless means to declare, that as "to us there is but one God, the Father," so there is but one Lord, or Mediator, between this true God and ourselves, even the man Christ Jesus. My reverend opponent further argues, in this 55th page of his book, that Christ must here be denominated *Lord* in the highest sense, because, (as he affirms), the work of *creation* is here ascribed to Christ, since it is said that "by him are all things." I object to this conclusion, that the premises from which it is drawn are altogether fallacious. I contend that the words of the original do not signify that any thing was *made*, or *created*, by Jesus Christ, but only that Jesus Christ is the minister of God *through* whom we have received all the blessings of the gospel. I contend that the preposition, (*δια*) employed by the sacred writer, properly signifies *instrumentality*, or *agency*; and therefore the passage, so far from implying that Christ is God, implies just the contrary, that he is the Minister

or Agent of God. I think that out of the very numerous instances, in which this preposition is employed in the Scriptures, there is not more than one which presents the least difficulty in the way of this conclusion. Here then you perceive, my brethren, that my reverend opponent and myself are again directly at issue on a matter of fact, on the meaning and force of a certain word employed in the Scriptures. He says that it bears a certain sense; I say that it rather bears a contrary sense. How shall we decide this question? He, of course, will not submit to my opinion, and I am certainly not disposed to submit to his. I am afraid that if I produce in my favour the authority of any mere modern scholars, he will immediately "throw them overboard." But it occurs to me, that if we could summon before us some of those great and learned men, who in the second and third centuries of the Christian Church employed the Greek language, almost as their native tongue, who wrote many and large books in this language, that their opinion, as to the proper force of a Greek preposition, may possibly be considered of more weight than mine, or than even the opinion of my reverend opponent. Now, I will produce such authority from the writings of Eusebius, a learned divine and historian of the Christian Church. Eusebius, in speaking of the Introduction to John's Gospel, has these remarks:—"And when he," (the Evangelist), "says in one place that the *world*, (v. 10,) and in another that *all things*, (v. 3,) were made *through* him, he declares the ministration," or agency, "of the Word to God. For when the Evangelist might have said 'All things were made *by* him,' (using quite another preposition *υπο*), and again "The world was made *by* him," (*υπο*), he has not said "*by* him," but "*THROUGH* him," (*δια*), in order that he might raise our conceptions to the underived power of the Father, as the original cause of all things."—(*Eusebius de Eccles. Theol. lib. I. c. 20, as quoted by Mr. Yates.*)

A very similar passage is to be found in Origen. If such competent authorities, upon a mere question of language, are to be contemptuously cast aside whenever they tell against us, there is an end of all rational argument.

I may as well here take notice of two or three attempts, which I understand my reverend opponent has made, to prove in a direct manner that there are three persons who are God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. First, he considers this to be proved by the fact, that the divine work of *creation* is attributed severally to each of those persons. Let us see how this argument can be sustained. With so acute a logician as my reverend opponent, I may be allowed to ask, How is it proved that the Father, the first person of the Godhead, was engaged in the work of creation? This he seems willing to infer, though very grudgingly, from the passage in Malachi, "Have

we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?" and he will doubtless say, as he does elsewhere, that I likewise shall admit this. He must know, however, that in the sense in which he is now about to use the word *Father*, I shall admit no such thing. I will cheerfully admit, indeed, that the Father, meaning thereby one sole person, who *alone* is God, was the Author of creation; but this will at once preclude the Trinitarian argument. In the unscriptural, theological sense of the term *Father*, as signifying one of three co-equal and co-eternal divine persons, I shall certainly not admit that the Father was engaged in creation, because I do not believe that there is any such person. But again, how is it to be proved that the Son, the second person of the Godhead, had likewise a part in the work of creation? This my opponent would prove by reference to the 3rd verse of the 1st chap. of John, where it is said that "all things were made by him;" and especially, by reference to the 16th v. of the 1st c. of the Epistle to the Colossians, where it is written, "by him were all things created." That is to say, he will refer to one passage which he knows that I, as a Unitarian, deny to have any relation to the Son, and to another passage which he knows that I deny to have any reference to proper creation; and all this, before he has said one syllable in opposition to my reasons for adopting a different interpretation of those passages. My friends, you must see that this is not argument; this is dexterously leaping over the very points in dispute. But again, how is it to be proved that the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Godhead, took part in creation? This, if I understand him rightly, my opponent would deduce from the 2nd verse of the 1st ch. of Genesis, where it is said, that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now he must know that I, as a Unitarian, do not admit that the Holy Spirit is any distinct and third person of the Godhead. I do not believe that the Spirit of God is any more a distinct person from God himself, than the spirit of a man is a distinct person from the man himself; and my opponent has not yet offered a single reason in confutation of this Unitarian doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. This therefore, again, is not argument; it is mere trifling. If you, my friends, only wish to hear the passages of Scripture *read*, to which Trinitarians commonly appeal in support of their faith, any of the respected clergy of Exeter could have done that for you; and I believe they would have done it in a more candid and Christian temper. But when a gentleman travels from East to West, avowedly to engage in controversy with a Unitarian, we naturally expect him to do something more.

There is another example of this mode of reasoning, which it may be convenient here to examine. In a former Lecture, I had to make some observations on the passage in the commencement of the 6th ch. of Isaiah, where it is thought to be related that the Prophet saw the divine glory of Christ in a

vision. My opponent now thinks, if I understand him, that he can prove the three persons to be included in that Jehovah who is there spoken of. First then, how is it shewn that the Father is here included? This seems to have been inferred from the circumstance that the divine person here spoken of is related, (in the 8th verse,) to have *sent* another. "Whom shall I *send*, and who will go for us?" You are told that it was the Father, who said this "out of his prerogative office!" It must surely be meant, that to *send* is the Father's *peculiar, exclusive* prerogative; otherwise it would clearly afford no evidence that the Father is here spoken of, any more than the Son, or the Holy Spirit. But if this be meant, I say that it is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures; for I read in the Scriptures, that the Son *sent* the Holy Spirit: (John chap. 15, v. 26,) "When the Comforter is come, *whom I will send* unto you from the Father;" and so in several other places. It is said, however, that I shall admit the Father to be here included. I shall admit no such thing, in the sense demanded. But again, how is it proved that the Son, the second person of the Godhead is included in this Jehovah? Why, this he says that I myself have already admitted! I, a Unitarian, have *admitted*, that Christ was the Jehovah whose glory Isaiah beheld in vision hundreds of years before Christ was born! This would surely be a very liberal admission for me to make. My brethren, I scarcely need tell you that I never did make any such admission. I must have been out of my senses ever to have entertained such a thought. How could any man seriously believe, unless he takes me for a born idiot, that I could make such an admission, and continue a Unitarian for another moment? It is not necessary for me to go over again the observations which I *did* make upon that passage of Isaiah, as referred to by John, in the 12th chap. of his Gospel. I said, in substance, that there are five or six distinct grounds of doubt, as to what the Evangelist means, when he says that the Prophet saw "*his* glory," and spake of him. I stated, that he might mean the glory of Jehovah, or he might mean the glory of Christ; but I never admitted that he could mean *both*, so as to identify Christ with Jehovah. I will tell you, my friends, in what manner I think and hope that I should have treated my opponent, in a case of this kind. If I had found it reported to me, that my reverend opponent had made some admission, which I must have seen in a moment that as a Trinitarian he never could have made, I think that I should have said to myself instantly, "This is an evident mistake in the report." I hope that I should have disdained to take advantage of such a circumstance, and still more to have made use of it, again and again, in the course of my reply. My reverend opponent could not afford to let such a circumstance escape him. But again, how is it to be proved that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is likewise included in this Jehovah? This he would prove by reference to

the 28th chap. and 25th verse of the Acts of the Apostles :— “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.” This is thought to be, and I believe it is, a quotation from this 6th chap. of Isaiah; and therefore it is again inferred, that the Holy Spirit is that Jehovah whose glory the prophet beheld. But once more, is not my reverend opponent aware, that no Unitarian admits the Holy Spirit to be a distinct and third person of the Godhead? The Holy Spirit is the spirit, the invisible, secret, controlling energy of God himself; and in this sense I believe it is very commonly understood even by Trinitarians. Is not this, again, leaping over the very points in dispute?

Thus, then, concludes my opponent's second attempt to prove a plurality of persons in the Godhead. You see that he cannot advance a single step, without calling upon me to admit that which he knows full well I shall never admit. I would willingly grant him any thing which I could grant in conscience; but when he expects me to allow the erroneousness of my own solemn religious convictions, I think you will agree with me, that this is asking rather too much.

There is only one more topic on which I will trouble you for a minute. I find that my reverend opponent has declaimed, at some length, against what he is pleased to call the mere *a priori* arguments, which I advanced in former Lectures. He says, that he “throws them all overboard,” as he does the human authorities which I may venture to produce. Now, my friends, this term *a priori*, is a learned phrase, and some may not know exactly what it means. I will tell you what I *think* it means. I understand that *a priori* arguments are arguments drawn from the antecedent possibility or impossibility, probability or improbability, of the truth or falsity of a proposition, independently of the direct, positive evidence, that may be advanced either for or against it. For example, suppose any person to be accused of some serious crime in a court of justice; of theft, for instance. The only evidence against him is a single expression or two in a letter which he is believed to have written, which expressions are so interpreted as to imply his guilt. The counsel for the defence, however, pleads a variety of circumstances, to shew the exceeding *improbability* of his guilt; as, for example, that the man is known to be very rich, and therefore could never have been under the slightest conceivable temptation to commit a paltry theft; that he is known to have displayed a character of the strictest honesty and uprightness, throughout a long and honourable life; that, from other facts established in evidence, he must have travelled with incredible speed, in order to have been on the spot where the theft was committed, at the time when it was committed; and a variety of other circumstances equally strong. Now all this

would be mere *a priori* argument: and you must imagine the counsel for the prosecution, rising and declaring that all this must be thrown overboard; that no such arguments could be allowed to have the slightest weight; that there *were* the two or three expressions in the letter, which could admit of no other interpretation than that which he chose to put upon them; and therefore that the man must be condemned. It is very likely that you might admire the ability and pertinacity of this counsel, regarded merely as an advocate. But what would the grave Judge upon the Bench, and what would the honest, simple-minded Jury, say to all these powerful considerations? Would *they* be likely to throw them all contemptuously aside, under the name of *a priori* arguments? That is the only serious question for us to entertain. I certainly did make use of some arguments of this kind in my former Lectures. I contended for the great *improbability* of the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ, because it is no where *stated* in the Scriptures, as other less important doctrines are, but, if true, left entirely to be inferred; because the sacred writers uniformly represent Christ as subject and subordinate to the Father, whom they declare to be the only true God; because Jesus Christ continually speaks, feels, and acts, according to Scripture history, as a creature, and not as the unchangeable God; because we meet with no traces, in Scripture, of the stupendous and awful effects which must surely have been produced on the minds of the disciples of Christ, when they first discovered that *he*, with whom they had familiarly lived and conversed, was the Almighty Jehovah; because the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ practically introduces two Gods, two distinct objects of supreme trust and worship; and I contended for the extreme improbability of the popular doctrine upon various other similar grounds. But I repeatedly stated to you, at the time, that I did not put forward these general considerations, as being in themselves decisive against the deity of Christ, in opposition even to a *single* unequivocal testimony of Scripture. I told you, that I would not be misunderstood on this point, though I might be misrepresented. I knew that I should be misrepresented; for I knew that there was no other way of evading the force of these arguments. I told you then, as I tell you now, that I do not build my Unitarian faith on any mere dictates of human reason, but on what I believe to be the true teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, whilst I say this, in justice to myself and to my own faith, I have no wish to conceal my real sentiments on this subject. I protest against the doctrine, advanced or insinuated by my reverend opponent in speaking of this class of arguments. I protest against the notion, that considerations of human *reason* can have nothing whatever to do with articles of religious belief. As long as I revere and love true religion, I never will admit the justice of this assumption. It is a doctrine which would allow all manner of absurdities

and contradictions to be imposed on the credulity of mankind under the abused name of religion. I protest against it, in the name of my own rights as a rational being; in the name of Christianity, the most reasonable religion in the world; in the name of Jesus Christ, who constantly appealed to the reason and understanding of his hearers; in the name of the God and Father of us all, who is the divine Author and Giver of human reason, and who will hereafter call us to account for the use which we have made of this most precious faculty.

LECTURE FIFTH.

JOHN, CH. 10, v. 30.

“I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE.”

I shall reserve the observations which I may have to make on these words, till the close of the Lecture. In general, indeed, when we preach Sermons, we commence with remarks upon our text; but on the present occasion I am not about to preach a Sermon to you, (I wish I was,) and I have my reasons for deferring my observations on this particular passage.

In my last Lecture, as many of you will remember, after entering at large on the defence of the Unitarian interpretation of the Proem of John's Gospel, I examined nine or ten distinct arguments, or objections, urged by my reverend opponent in his recent discourses. I shall now pursue that branch of the subject. And you will allow me to take this opportunity of saying, that as I have now had time to peruse more carefully the reports which have been made to me of those discourses, I am astonished at the numerous and extraordinary misapprehensions of what I did say and mean in my former Lectures; and therefore I would entreat your candid and patient hearing, whilst I now endeavour to set myself right, and to vindicate the arguments and assertions which I really did advance.

The next argument in order, then, which I shall examine, relates to the passage in the 1st Epistle of John, ch. 5 v. 20 :—“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” My reverend opponent would conclude from this passage, as many others have done before him, that Jesus Christ is denominated “the true God;” but he says that the grammatical principle, on which he would build such a conclusion, is not that the pronoun “this” must refer

to the last antecedent, "as some who argue but very incorrectly would assume." I am not sure, whether he means this hint for me, or for some of his fellow labourers in the Trinitarian cause, whom he has several times gently rebuked for their illogical methods of reasoning. I do not remember that I formerly considered this passage as a distinct argument for the deity of Christ. I merely referred to it in one place for illustration; and I did not then affirm, that it is a sound, invariable rule of grammatical construction, that a demonstrative pronoun must refer to the *last* antecedent. I merely said, that this was the principle on which Trinitarians themselves commonly argue, when they appeal to this text for proof of the deity of Christ; and I find, upon investigation, that I was perfectly correct in making that assertion. But my reverend opponent tells you that this is not right; he says "the grammatical principle is, that the pronoun "*this*" refers to the *prominent* antecedent, the *prominent* person discoursed of in the preceding passage." Now I entreat you to read the passage attentively, and to say whether this favourite rule of my opponent does not exceedingly weaken, even if it does not completely destroy, the Trinitarian argument from this passage. Weaken it, it certainly must; because it shifts the ground of the argument from a matter of plain fact, to a matter of mere opinion or feeling. What is the *last* antecedent in a sentence, is a matter of fact, which is determined in a moment, by simply looking at the passage:—the last antecedent in this place, for instance, is evidently "his Son Jesus Christ." But what is the *prominent* antecedent in a sentence, where there are confessedly more than one, is a matter of opinion, on which any two persons may differ. To say the least of it, therefore, this new principle of my reverend opponent greatly weakens the Trinitarian argument from this passage. But I think it does more than this; I think it completely destroys the argument. It is, in fact, the very principle on which Unitarians have usually replied to the Trinitarian argument from this text. I beseech you to read the whole verse, and then to judge, whether the *prominent* antecedent, the *prominent* person discoursed of, be not "Him that is true," who is twice mentioned in the verse, and who cannot be Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is here expressly declared to be "his Son;" and I surely may be allowed so far to make use of my reason, as to affirm that no being or person can be his own Son. I take it to be certain, if we may trust to the sacred writers to explain their own meaning, that the person here referred to as "the true God," is the *Father*, who is elsewhere declared, in the writings of the same Evangelist, to be the "only true God," (John, ch. 17, v. 3.) The passage in the Gospel is, indeed, very similar to, and throws light upon, the passage in the Epistle. In the one place our Saviour himself, and in the other his Apostle, is speaking of our having received the knowledge, a right understanding, of the Father, "the

only true God," "Him that is true," through his Son Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. But my reverend opponent tells you, that Jesus Christ must be intended here, because it is said, "This is the true God and *eternal life*," which latter phrase, he affirms, is a Scriptural title of Jesus Christ. This I doubt exceedingly; indeed, I do not believe that it is so. I believe that this expression, "eternal life," does not mean the person of the Father, nor the person of the Son, nor any other person; but it means, the right *knowledge* and *understanding* of the Father, communicated through the Son. It is very plain that this is the meaning of it in the passage of the Gospel, already alluded to, "This is life eternal, that they might *know* thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Here you perceive that it is not the Father, nor the Son, but it is our *knowledge* of the Father through the Son, which is called "eternal life." I would direct your attention also to the 11th v. of this same 5th ch. of the 1st Epistle of John, only a few verses before the passage under consideration:—"This is the record, that God hath given to us *eternal life*, and this life is in" or by "his Son." Here likewise, it is plain that "eternal life" does not mean either the Father or the Son, but some blessings which we have received of the Father through the Son. We have, then, two unambiguous instances, in the very same Evangelist, in which the expression bears this meaning. Let us next turn to the beginning of this same Epistle, (the 1st and 2d vs. of the 1st ch.):—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." I stated to you, in a former Lecture, and I now repeat it, that this verse is not correctly translated in our common version. Where we read "*of* the Word of Life," the original is not a simple instance of the genitive or possessive case, but a distinct preposition is employed, which means "concerning," or "respecting;" and the proper translation would be, "That which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, respecting the word of life." I also proved to you, by reference to the 16th v. of the 2nd ch. of the Epistle to the Philippians, that this expression, "the word of life," does not mean the *person*, but the *doctrine*, of Jesus Christ. I am well satisfied that the same thing is meant by the "eternal life" mentioned in the second verse of this 1st Epistle of John:—"For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it* (there is nothing in the original answering to the word "*it*," nor is there any occasion to insert it in the translation; it only serves to confuse and mislead the reader; the literal rendering of the passage would be,) "And the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and do testify, and announce unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and has been manifested unto us." Here therefore again, this expression, "eternal life," may evidently bear the same meaning, which we have seen that it certainly does bear

in two other passages of the same Evangelist. Why, then, should we doubt, that it also has the same meaning in the text which is now under discussion. Doubtless, the Apostle means by "the true God," "him that is true," the Father, the only true God, the prominent antecedent, the prominent person discoursed of in the foregoing sentence; and by "eternal life," he means, neither the Father nor the Son, but the same thing as he means by the same expression elsewhere, and which indeed he is also treating of in the foregoing sentence, the right *understanding* and *knowledge* of the true God, through his Son Jesus Christ. This is the plain, common-sense interpretation of the passage; let controversialists twist and torture it as they may.

In the next place, I find my reverend opponent deducing an argument for a plurality of persons in the Godhead, from the use of plural verbs and pronouns in reference to God. You know that there are three or four instances of this kind in the Old Testament; the most remarkable instance is in the 1st chap. of Genesis, where God is represented as saying, "Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Because the plural pronouns, *us* and *our*, are here said to have been employed by God, my opponent would infer that there must be a *plurality* of divine persons. I endeavoured to shew you, in the last Lecture, how little force there is in the argument drawn from the plural form of the word *Elohim*, which is translated "God" in the Scriptures. I think there is, if possible, still less force in the present argument. Suppose, for a moment, that we could give no reasonable account of this peculiarity of language. Do you think, judging soberly and seriously on the subject, that it is an argument on which we should be justified in building such a stupendous doctrine, as that there are three persons to be equally honoured and worshipped as God? Is it a kind of argument from which we could safely infer such a doctrine? Undoubtedly we think and feel very differently in these cases; but speaking as a Unitarian, I say most seriously, that if a feather were floating before my eyes in the air, and I could not tell where it came from, and if I were to infer that it came from France, merely because there are feathers in France, when there are so many other places from which it might come, it seems to me that I should not in this case reason more loosely, than Trinitarians do in deriving the doctrine of three divine persons from this peculiarity of the Hebrew Scriptures. However, I am of opinion that we *can* give some reasonable account of this mode of expression. It appears to have been, from the most ancient times, a dignified, royal, majestic method of speaking. Kings were accustomed to speak in this manner, saying "we," and "us," in the plural number, though but one individual person. We may therefore easily suppose, that this mode of expression was employed by the sacred historian as being suitable to the great dignity and majesty of God. But then

you are told by my reverend opponent, that this custom of kings, in speaking of themselves individually in the plural number, was not in use so early as the time of Moses. How does he know that? It is a considerable thing, you will observe, for any man to assert positively that a certain custom did *not* exist at a certain period of the world. It is not so easy to prove a direct negative. My opponent, however, thinks it is easily proved, by the circumstance that Nebuchadnezzar, in the Book of Daniel, continually speaks in the singular number; from this he infers at once, that the custom of kings speaking in the plural was not known up to the time of the prophet Daniel. This, at all events, is a very quick way of arriving at an important conclusion: some of us are obliged to travel more slowly. How does it follow with such certainty, that because an Assyrian king employed the singular, that therefore no other kings, Jewish or Heathen, had ever employed the plural form of expression, on especial and solemn occasions? I think, moreover, that this assertion of my reverend opponent may be shewn to be erroneous, from the testimony of the Scriptures themselves. I refer you to the 1st. Book of Kings, (chap. 12, v. 9), which, you know, records events long preceding the times of the prophet Daniel. It appears to me, that king Rehoboam there makes use of the plural pronoun. We read, (v. 3), that all the congregation of Israel came and spoke unto Rehoboam, saying, "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, make thou the grievous service of thy father lighter, and we will serve thee," Rehoboam then consults with the old men and the young men about him, and at length says, "What counsel give ye, that *we* may answer this people. I certainly understand him to mean himself, individually, in his character of king. He alone had been petitioned by the congregation of Israel; he alone was expected to give, or could give, the answer. There is another instance of the same kind, in the book of Ezra, (chap. 4, v. 18), we read, in the 8th and 11th verses, that "Rheum the Chancellor, and Shimshai the Scribe, and others their companions," had written a letter of complaint against the Jews to king Artaxerxes. The letter was addressed to the king individually, in his kingly character, and we read, in the 17th and 18th verses, that the king returned an answer, which began in these words, "The letter which ye sent unto *us* hath been plainly read before me." It is clear from these examples, that the assertions of my reverend opponent, which he makes with so much confidence, and which I fear others rely on with equal confidence, are not always to be trusted without examination. It is clear, I think, that kings were accustomed to use this mode of expression before the time of Daniel, and for any thing which can be shewn to the contrary, before the time of Moses. "Yes, but who can suppose," exclaims my reverend opponent, "that God would ever borrow modes of expression from his own creatures, in order to

set forth his divine power and majesty? Who can suppose that the dignity of God could be shewn by imitating the language of earthly kings?" Now, my brethren, do let me entreat you to consider how perfectly childish all this declamation is. Is not every thing which is said by God, or relating to God, in the Scriptures, necessarily borrowed from the ways and customs of his creatures? Is there any other method, by which a single idea can be conveyed to our minds concerning God? When God is represented as *speaking* at all, whether in the singular or plural, when God is said to *hear*, to *see*, to stretch forth his arm, to make the clouds his chariot, to walk upon the wings of the wind; in short, whenever any thing is represented as being said or done by God, is it not all of necessity borrowed from the language and ways of his earthly creatures? There is absolutely no other means, by which the will and purposes of God can be made known to us. This objection, therefore, is quite preposterous.

But I have another observation to make on this subject. You say that the use of plural pronouns, in reference to God, proves a plurality of *persons* in the Godhead. How so? Why does it not prove at once a plurality of *Gods*? This would surely be the legitimate inference, if any inference of the kind must be drawn. But you say, No; I must not draw this inference; I must only infer that, in some mysterious sense, not to be explained or understood, there is a plurality of persons in the one true God. The use of a plural pronoun then, it would seem, proves a plurality of divine *persons*? Very well; let it be so, for the sake of argument. But if I admit this principle, I shall claim the right to avail myself of it, as well as the Trinitarian. Now, where you can produce three or four instances in which God speaks in the plural form, I can produce three or four thousand in which he speaks in the singular form; and from this I infer, on the same principle, not merely that there is but one God, but that God is a single *person*; and remember, that my argument for the strict personal unity of God, is thus rendered three or four thousand times stronger than your similar argument for a plurality of divine persons. But here you again exclaim, No; I must not draw any such inference from the use of *singular* pronouns, as you take the liberty of drawing from the use of *plural* pronouns. That is to say, you claim the special and exclusive privilege of employing the most trifling arguments. I cheerfully yield it to you. I neither demand nor desire such a privilege.

The next passage which I have to examine, is in the 5th chap. and 23rd verse of the Gospel according to John. "That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." This indeed is a serious argument; and it is refreshing to meet with it, after so much which I can regard no otherwise than as trifling with the Scriptures and the subject. We must read the preceding verse:—"For the Father judgeth

no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.” The sense immediately suggested to my mind on reading this passage, is, that all men should honour Christ, as one to whom God has “committed” great power and authority, as the appointed minister, agent, and representative of God, in some great moral work. Any allusion to the supposed *natural* claims of Jesus to be revered and worshipped as God, or indeed any allusion to the subject of religious worship at all, would seem to be entirely foreign from the main import and object of the passage. Whatever may be the kind of “honour” intended, men are taught to “honour the Son even as they honour the Father,”—not because the Son is himself uncreated God, equal in all respects to the Father,—but for a reason which would rather seem to exclude the idea of any such perfect equality between the two persons ; namely, that the Father has “committed,” entrusted, given over, and assigned to the Son, a certain degree of moral authority. So that if interpreters would be guided by the plain tendency of the passage, considered altogether, they would see that nothing could be less relevant to the main subject in this place, than any mention of the essential natural equality of Christ with the Father. But it is too much the practice with Christians of the orthodox persuasion, to despise these general considerations, however clear and powerful, if they can avail themselves of any *minute* argument from particular words and phrases. I must therefore endeavour to shew, that when the language of the passage is fairly examined, they have no such argument in the present case. “*That all men should honour the Son EVEN AS they honour the Father.*” I believe there is not a single passage of Scripture in which the word, (*καθως*,) here rendered “*even as*”, is used to express a perfect likeness, or perfect equality, between the two objects or actions which it serves to compare. In some cases, it implies a certain kind and degree of *similarity*, near or distant, literal or figurative, real or imaginary, according to the particular nature of the subjects compared ; in other cases, it appears to be employed to shew, that the latter of the two subjects bears to the former the relation of a cause, a reason, or an occasion, but never, I apprehend, to shew that the two are to be considered in all respects equal and alike. We read for instance that “as, (*καθως*,) Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation ;”—and again, “as, (*καθως*,) it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man ;” and again, in the third chapter of this same Gospel, “as, (*καθως*,) Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” In every one of these instances, it is plain that nothing more than *some degree of similarity* can be intended ; for though the days of Noah may have been in some respects like the days

of the Son of man, and also the lifting up of the brazen serpent may be imagined to be something like the lifting up of our Saviour on the cross,—near enough for an illustration,—yet no one will maintain that the similitude was perfect. The just inference, therefore, from the expression now under consideration, should seem to be, that we are to pay honours to Christ, not necessarily the same as those which we pay to God, but only in some way, and in some degree, resembling them; the particular way and degree must be determined by our own judgments, under the guidance of reason and the general principles of our faith.

This, I say, would be the just inference, so far as we have hitherto examined the phraseology in question. But perhaps, in order to make this evident to the mind of a Trinitarian, we must turn to other passages, in which the same rigid interpretation for which he contends in this instance, would on his own principles lead to the greatest absurdity. In the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel, our Saviour says, addressing the Father concerning the Apostles,—“Thou hast loved them as (*καθως*), thou hast loved me.” The Trinitarian will not be prepared to infer from this, that the love and favour which God shewed to the Apostles were in *all respects equal* to that which God bestowed on Christ, his chosen and well-beloved Son:—it would be inconsistent with the Scriptures to believe this, and peculiarly inconsistent with the doctrine of the Trinitarian, who considers Christ to be the divine and eternal Son of God. A yet stronger passage, however, occurs in the eleventh verse of the same chapter, where Jesus prays to God for his disciples in these words,—“that they may be one as, (*καθως*) we are one.” What Trinitarian will or can admit, that the oneness between Christ and his disciples is in all respects equal and identical with the oneness between God and Christ? He contends, indeed, that they are not even similar, not of the same *kind*, the one being a union of nature and essence, the other a moral union only. In this I think he is mistaken. The union of Christ with the Father is in some respects *similar* to that of Christ and the Father with all pious believers: being in both cases a moral and spiritual, not a natural union. But even Unitarians do not suppose that the one is *altogether equal* to the other; and it is plain that Trinitarians can never draw such an inference, without the grossest violation of their own principles. If the language of Scripture, therefore, in the controverted passage before us, is to be interpreted according to its manifest signification in other passages, we must understand, that men are to pay honours to Christ in some way or other *resembling* those which they pay to God, but not necessarily *equal* or *precisely* like to them.

Sometimes, however, as I have remarked, the word under explanation appears to be used to shew that one of the two subjects mentioned bears to the other the relation of a cause, a rea-

son, or an occasion. The words of Christ in speaking of himself may be taken as an example of this :—"Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee ; as, (*καθως*,) thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." This seems clearly to mean, that since God had bestowed such authority on Jesus, as to make him the author of eternal life to all men, *therefore* it was proper that God should now in an especial manner glorify his Son. In the Epistle to the Romans, also, we read concerning the Gentiles, that "*even as*, (*καθως*,) they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." This seems clearly to mean, that *since* the Gentiles had forsaken the knowledge of the true God, *because* of their idolatrous wanderings from him, God had given them over to a reprobate mind. The just inference, then, from this class of passages, is, that when our Saviour says, "all men should honour the Son, *even as* they honour the Father," he means that *since* all men profess to honour the Father, *because* they are bound to honour the Father, *therefore* should they honour the Son, unto whom the Father hath committed all judgment. But the very form and grounds of the precept shew, that we are to honour Christ, not as himself God, but as the messenger whom God hath sent.

In the next place, I find that my reverend opponent has carried your attention to the 23 ch. and 42 v. of the Gospel of Luke, as containing another proof of the deity of Christ. They are the words of the penitent thief on the cross, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." I had referred, in a former Lecture, to the 12th ch. and 31st v. of this Gospel, to shew that the Father is God, "Seek ye the kingdom of God ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." My reverend opponent says, that this precept was fulfilled by the penitent thief, when he besought Christ to remember him in *his* kingdom ; therefore the kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of God, and therefore Christ is God ! Now, my brethren, do you see the force of this argument ? Do you recognise the soundness of this method of reasoning ; that because the dispensation of the gospel, or the state of future blessedness to which it may lead, is called sometimes the kingdom of Christ, and sometimes the kingdom of God, that therefore Christ is God ? May it not be denominated the kingdom of God, because it originated entirely with God, because it is the effect of his divine wisdom, power and goodness ? and may it not also be called the kingdom of Christ, because Christ is the spiritual king whom God hath raised up, and anointed with the holy spirit and with power, to reign as his vicegerent in this kingdom of grace ? This is one of those arguments, of which I told you, in the commencement, that I should only examine one or two of a kind, and leave others of the same kind to share the fate of their fellows. If you can perceive any conclusiveness, any weight whatever, in

such arguments, your understandings and mine must be differently constituted. To me it would appear just as reasonable, to argue that, because the divine law under which the Jews lived is sometimes called the law of Moses, and sometimes the law of God, that therefore Moses is God. But I forget, that I must not dare to illustrate the feebleness of my opponent's arguments in this way, lest I should be rebuked for impiety. In my former Lectures, I ventured to illustrate the danger of that mode of reasoning in which the deity of Christ is often attempted to be proved, by shewing that the same mode of reasoning would equally prove the deity of Moses. What says my reverend opponent to this? Instead of endeavouring to convince you that those observations of mine were unsound, he starts! and affects to shudder at the man who would presume to *compare Moses with Christ*. My brethren, he knows full well that I never had a thought of comparing Moses with Christ. He knows that my views of the character, office, and dignity of Christ, are immeasurably above all that was ever conceived of as belonging to Moses. All which I did, was to compare *his argument* for the deity of Christ with a perfectly similar argument, which any man might urge for the deity of Moses. If, for merely doing this, you charge me with irreverence, I say that I indignantly repel the charge. I will not retort it upon you, but I repel it from myself. And yet if there were any irreverence manifested in the case, the blame of it would rest with you, who bring forward such arguments, not with me who am compelled, either to illustrate their weakness in this manner, or to seem to acknowledge their force. But this, my brethren, is one of the arts of controversy. Whenever you meet with an objection or an argument which you know not how to answer, instead of answering it, represent your opponent as a man who is guilty of something very shameful in making use of such an argument. This, I say, is one of the arts of controversy.

In the next place, I find my reverend opponent employing much declamation against the few remarks which I offered on the nature of *inferential* reasoning. He is very angry, that I should object to his making use of inferential reasoning. Now, I throw myself on your recollection, whether I was so absurd as to condemn all use of this kind of reasoning on moral subjects? I am chargeable with no such folly. I know that we cannot advance far in the investigation of any moral or religious subject, without having recourse in some measure to inferential reasoning. But I only endeavoured to point out to you the real nature of such evidence; and especially to call your attention to the fact, that this doctrine of the deity of Christ is supported entirely by such evidence, and not, as all the unquestionable doctrines of the gospel are, by the plain and repeated *declarations* of the sacred writers. I merely pointed out to you the danger which lurks in the incautious employment of such a method of reasoning. So long as we abide by the

express statements of the inspired teachers, we are safe; we rely on their divine authority; but when we betake ourselves to numerous and complicated *inferences*, this is altogether an exercise of our own fallible judgment, and it may easily mislead us. This was all that I said. What is the answer of my opponent? He cannot shew that my observations were groundless, or inapplicable; but he cries out against the man who could dare, forsooth, to find fault with him for making use of inferential reasoning; and he says that, in doing so, I at the same time find fault with my Saviour Jesus Christ, for he employed inferential reasoning with the Sadducees on the subject of the resurrection. He says, moreover, that this is not the only instance, in which the Unitarian by his method of arguing brings accusations against the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, my brethren, I ask you whether this is a right and fair way of conducting a religious discussion? But this is another of the arts of controversy. When you cannot, by fair means, remove the objections of your opponent, make no scruple of attributing to him conduct which you know to be most repugnant to every solemn feeling of his soul. This is another of the arts of controversy. What would some men do without them?

We are next referred to the 11th and 12th vs. of the 1st chap. of the Epistle to the Galatians, to prove that Christ is God:—"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The Apostle here declares that the doctrine of the gospel is not after man, that he himself had not received it of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. From this, my reverend opponent would infer, "that Christ is more than man." Nay, I object to that, as not being the strictly logical inference. If you infer any thing, you must infer, not merely that Christ was something *more* than man, but that Christ was *not a man at all*; for the Apostle expressly declares that he had not received the gospel of man, though he confesses that he had received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. If you will have recourse to these inferences, I cannot allow you to infer just as much, or just as little, as may happen to suit your purpose: I shall insist on your inferring that which is strictly inferable from the premises. The strict inference here is, that Jesus Christ was not a man at all; which is rather more, I presume, than you are prepared to contend for. The passage, therefore, when it is so dealt with, either proves nothing, or it proves too much. But is it not, my Christian friends, the plain, common-sense meaning of this passage, simply that the gospel is not of human invention, not a mere tradition of men, but came immediately from God by revelation through Jesus Christ; that it is divine in its origin, and divine in its character? Is not this, I say, the plain common-sense meaning of the passage? It

is pitiful, to see such a sentiment as this forced out of its connexion, where it has a beautiful moral importance, to be dragged into the arena of controversy.

I next find my reverend opponent contending that Christ is God, on the ground that he claimed to perform miracles by his own natural, divine power. For proof of this, we are referred to the instance of the blind men, (Matthew ch. 9. v. 28), where "Jesus saith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this? they said unto him, Yea, Lord; then touched he their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you;" likewise to the instance of the leper, (Matthew ch. 8, v. 2), "And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean; and Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Because in these instances our Saviour declares himself able to perform these miracles, without at the moment ascribing the power by which he wrought them to his God and Father, my reverend opponent would infer that Jesus professed to work miracles by his *own* Almighty Power. What! will you lay this to his charge, after he himself has solemnly told you, that it was the Father who dwelt in him and did all the works? Will you sooner rely on your own inferences, than on his solemn word and declaration? Is this treating him respectfully, not to say reverently? What occasion was there for him repeatedly to inform such a people as the Jews, that he, a human being, though a prophet of God, did not perform miracles by his own power? They were in no danger of falling into such a strange mistake. Observe the inference which they drew, when Jesus performed in their presence even a greater miracle than these, (Matthew ch. 9. v. 8.) "When the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God who had given such power unto men." Such was their inference, for they had no Trinitarian prejudices to blind their understandings; and it was the proper inference. Therefore there was no need of our Lord's continually disclaiming that which none of his hearers would think of ascribing to him. But my reverend opponent imagines he can prove more than this. He can prove, not only that Christ wrought miracles by his own divine power, but that all the three persons of the Godhead were engaged in the performance of these miracles. How can this be shown? Because our Lord says in one place, (Matthew ch. 12. v. 28), "I cast out devils by the spirit of God." Here my reverend opponent thinks we have mention of the three persons of the Godhead, as the authors of the miracles of Jesus. "I," that is, Christ, God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, "cast out demons by the Spirit," that is, the Holy Ghost, the third person, "of God," that is, the Father, the first person; for the name "God," you must have observed, means any one of the three persons, this, that, or the other, just as it may suit a Trinitarian's purpose for the moment. Now I

venture to ask you again, my brethren, whether you do really feel and acknowledge the force of such an argument as this?—I entreat you to lay aside, as much as possible, all your prejudices and foregone conclusions, and to imagine yourselves in the circumstances of those who witnessed the miracles of Jesus Christ. Imagine that some wise and holy person should make his appearance in this age, delivering the most pure and sublime doctrine, and daily performing the mightiest miracles. Suppose you were brought into the presence of this great person, to hear his teaching and to behold his works; and suppose the very first deed which you saw him perform was to give sight to the blind, and the very first words you heard him utter were these, “I by the spirit of God perform this miracle.” Do you think you should immediately infer, that this person himself was God? and not only so, but that there were two other divine persons equally engaged in the working of the miracle? Would you not rather infer, that the person whom you saw and heard was a meek and humble servant of God, since he piously ascribed all his might and wisdom to the Supreme Being?—Truly, such Trinitarian arguments as these are not merely futile; they are something worse, which I must not venture to describe.

We are in the next place directed to the 3d chap. and 11th verse of the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians. “Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.” Here again my reverend opponent thinks that he discovers the three persons of the Godhead. In order to make this out, he understands that by “God” is here meant the Holy Spirit. Just now, you will remember, it meant the Father; but as I then told you, it means this, that, or the other, as may suit the Trinitarian’s purpose for the moment. I pause to ask you if it be likely, that the sense of the most important term in religion, even the name of God himself, would be thus left to be determined in every separate passage of Scripture by the fallible judgment of a heated disputant? Is this at all probable? However, there is no reason to doubt, that “God and our Father” here mean the same person. Neither is there any evidence that this is a prayer addressed to three persons, or even to two persons, or to any one but the Father. It is a devout *wish*, that God, even the Father, and Jesus Christ, might so direct the way of the Apostle as to enable him to visit the Thessalonians. You may consider it as a *prayer*, if you will; but you have no evidence that, as a prayer, it was addressed to Christ, as well as to the Father, although it relates to the favour and assistance both of God himself and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, we know, was in that age miraculously engaged in directing the spiritual affairs of his disciples. The Apostle himself tells us, that “he bowed his knee to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our attention is next called to the 3d chap. and 18th verse of the 2nd Epistle of Peter. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever, Amen." This is a doxology, or an ascription of praise and glory, supposed to be ascribed to our Saviour. If it were certain that we have here the correct reading, I should have no hesitation in saying that it was a very strong passage in the Trinitarian's favour. It does seem like an ascription of the honors of deity to Christ, and therefore it would present a considerable difficulty; but still, even in that case, I should feel bound as a Unitarian to regard it merely in the light of a difficulty; for I see not why I should expect, more than a Christian of any other denomination, to meet with no difficulties whatever in the Scriptures. But I must observe that it is very doubtful whether our common reading of this passage be correct. Some good authorities, and amongst them both the Syriac versions, which are considered the most ancient and valuable in the world, after the words "Jesus Christ" read these additional words, "and of God the Father." This, of course, if it be the correct reading, which is very probable, entirely destroys the argument from this place for the deity of Christ. This, at all events, is sufficient to render the argument from this passage exceedingly doubtful. It is one of those passages which ought, in fairness, to be left out of consideration in this controversy. And here I must take the liberty of saying, that I do not exactly understand the principle by which some Trinitarian advocates appear to be governed in these cases. They bring forward passages of Scripture in which they know the reading to be very doubtful, where the common reading has escaped the condemnation of the most able critics only as it were by an hair's breadth; and yet they argue from these passages before a popular audience, as though the common reading were indisputably right. I presume not to find fault with them for doing so. I only say that I do not exactly understand the principle by which they are governed.

I am now brought to the examination of another passage, which my reverend opponent produced before; but which, he says, I left altogether unnoticed because I knew it was impossible for me to answer it. Such is the inference which he is always ready to draw. The passage is found in the 5th chap. of John's Gospel, extending from the 17th to the 21st verses inclusive. Christ had performed a miracle on the Sabbath-day. The Jews in their malignity immediately accused him of irreverence and impiety:—"Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, (v. 16), and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day." But Jesus answered them, (v. 17) "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." There are two senses, I conceive, in which these words of our Saviour may be understood; though in the end they both amount to

the same general import. His meaning may be this: "My heavenly Father doth not rest from doing works of mercy and beneficence on the Sabbath-day. God continues his kind providence over men; He provides for their bodily and spiritual wants, on the Sabbath as on all other days. Therefore I, who am the chosen Son and messenger of God, may employ myself in the same kind of works on the Sabbath-day, in doing good to the bodies and the souls of men, as in the miracle which I have just now performed." This, you will recollect, is the sentiment which Jesus delivered, in different words, on another occasion, —namely, that although we must not engage in worldly labours, yet it is lawful "to do good," even on the Sabbath-day. Or the meaning of our Saviour may be this:—"You accuse me of breaking the Sabbath, because I have performed a miracle on this day. Your accusation is absurd, if not impious; for you know that I could not perform miracles except by the power of God. You know that the power by which I have healed this sick and impotent man, is not so much my power, as the power of my heavenly Father, who dwelleth in me and doeth the works. It is God therefore, rather than me, whom you accuse of violating the Sabbath; since it is by his Spirit that these miracles are wrought." We then read that the Jews, (v. 18,) "sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." Such was their malicious interpretation of his words. Jesus did not make himself equal with God, by calling God his Father; for God is the Father of all, especially of the good and holy. Perhaps, however, Jesus appeared to call God his Father in some peculiar sense; the language of the original (*πᾶτερ ἰδίον*), certainly favours this opinion; and if so, he was perfectly justified, for he was not only a good and holy man, but the Son of God in a high and especial sense, as the Christ, the Saviour of the world. Jesus then replies (v. 19), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." I understand our Saviour to be here repeating, or further explaining, the sentiment which he had uttered in the 17th verse; as though he had said, "I can do nothing of myself, as you perfectly well know, but every thing through the power and authority of my heavenly Father, in whose name I act, and by whom I am sent. The same kind of works, deeds of mercy and kindness, which I see my heavenly Father perform on the Sabbath day, I do likewise; for I have herein his example and authority, and I know it to be his will that I should so employ myself, even on the Sabbath." Or the meaning may be, I as I observed in speaking of the 17th verse, "do no other works on the Sabbath, than those which I see my heavenly Father do; for, in truth, my works are the works of God, since it is by his power, not my own, that these

miracles to which you object are performed. I and my Father, who dwelleth in me, are jointly engaged in working these miracles." But I must observe, in passing, that my reverend opponent suggests a correction in the translation of the latter part of this verse. He evidently considers this suggestion to be one of much importance, for he has dwelt upon it on several occasions. He says it should not be, "What things soever the Father doeth, *these* also doeth the Son;" but it should be, "*the same* also doeth the Son;" the very *same* things which the Father doeth the Son doeth likewise. I grant that it should be so, if the Greek be literally translated. But can you perceive any such great difference between the two translations? Is this one of the instances in which my reverend opponent thinks a new translation of the Scriptures would greatly add to the evidence for the deity of Christ? If so, I vehemently suspect that he will not persuade other Trinitarians to set quite so high a value on his new translation as he himself manifestly does. But what is the inference which my reverend opponent would draw from this passage when thus corrected? He would infer that the Son can of himself do *equal* things with the Father, and therefore that the Son is equal in divine power with the Father. Nay, I object here again, that this is not the strictly logical inference from the premises. I cannot allow you in this manner always to infer just as much, or just as little, as may suit your convenience. If what things soever the Father doeth, *the very same* things doeth the Son, the rigid inference is, not that the power of the Son is *equal* to the power of the Father, but that the power of the Son is identically the *same* power as the power of the Father. I am very far from being certain, that this was not the precise meaning which our Saviour intended to express. This will harmonize with the sense which I have said may probably belong to his words in the 17th verse,—namely, that the miracles which he wrought were in truth wrought by God; since his miraculous power was, in fact, the Almighty Power of the Father, manifested through him; not an equal independent power, but identically the same power. The words of Jesus, when corrected as my reverend opponent suggests, appear to me either to convey this meaning, or to mean simply that Christ performed on the Sabbath the very *same kind* of works which he saw his heavenly Father perform on that day, works of compassion and benevolence. All this is further explained in the next verse:—"For the Father loveth the Son, (v. 20.) and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." Here Jesus expressly declares, that it is the Father who sheweth him all things; it is by the direction and authority of the Father that he knoweth what to do; and by the power of the Father he is enabled to perform it. Surely, then, it is plain, beyond all contradiction, that Jesus cannot himself be God equal with the Father. Moreover, it is here declared that the Father would, at some future time, shew the Son even *greater* works than he

had yet accomplished. Surely this proves that Jesus Christ himself was not God; for how could God receive any addition either to his knowledge or his power? In this verse, you perceive, we have a complete explanation of the derived and dependent power of Jesus, shewing clearly that he is not God equal with the Father. What, then, does my reverend opponent say to this verse? How does he reconcile its plain statements with his Trinitarian doctrine? Astonishing as it may seem, (will you believe me when I say it?) he leaves this verse out of consideration entirely, and purposely. I have his own authority for saying so. He told you that "he would not read this twentieth verse, for he was concerned only with those verses which prove the equality of Christ with the Father." Well! this is one way of treating the Scriptures; but I must be allowed to express my serious doubts whether it is altogether the *right* way, even in a case of great emergency, such as I grant yours to be. You leave out this verse? In a passage where Christ is speaking of his power in working miracles, there occurs a verse in which he positively declares, that it was the Father who shewed him these works, and who would afterwards shew him greater works; and you propose "to leave out this verse," in order to countenance your doctrine that Christ was equal with the Father, and claimed to work all his miracles by his own divine power! I say this is one way of treating the Scriptures; but is it the right way? I ask you, my brethren, what would have been said of me, if I had done this?—The walls and pillars of the fine edifice of St. Sidwell's Church would have rung with vehement cries of "audacity!" and the lofty roof would have echoed "audacity!" against the man who could dare to take such liberties with the word of God.

I come now to the examination of another passage, which has been appealed to by my reverend opponent. It is found in the 11th ch. and 27th v. of the Gospel according to Matthew: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." In this passage our Saviour affirms, that neither himself the Son, nor the Father, could be known to any man unless from divine revelation. They were known, he declares, only to each other. In what sense, in reference to what kind of knowledge, both of himself and the Father did Jesus make this assertion? He says, in the verses preceding, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:—Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.—All things are delivered unto me of my Father." What things can it be supposed that our Lord is here speaking of? Surely it is of the things which belong to the will and counsels of the Father for the redemption of mankind? These were the only things, the knowledge of which could be *revealed* unto babes in

wisdom, though they were hidden from the unbelieving Jews, the wise and prudent in their own conceit. Why, then, should it be imagined that Jesus alluded to any other kind of knowledge, in the particular words under consideration, which immediately follow, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father?" At that time, not even the chosen disciples of Christ had any accurate conceptions of the nature and objects of his divine mission. No one but God himself knew the purposes for which Jesus was sent into the world, or the means by which those purposes were to be accomplished. The glorious design of salvation for Jew and Gentile, was yet a mystery, an unrevealed secret, hidden in the bosom of God alone, or imparted only to his beloved Son. "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." This clause is reciprocal and correlative to the former. It follows, in the sense I have explained, that if no one but the Father knew the Son, no one but the Son could know the Father;—though it would by no means follow according to the Trinitarian interpretation; for many persons might and did know the Godhead, the eternity, the infinite majesty and perfection of the Father, without having the least conception that these attributes belonged to the Son. But if no one except the Father knew the true nature of Christ's office and mission, (as was undoubtedly the case at this time), then no one except Christ, and he to whomsoever Christ should make the revelation, could know the all-merciful plans of the Father, contemplated in the Christian dispensation. It is evident, from the very construction of the passage, that the knowledge respecting the Son, is *the same kind* of knowledge as that which respects the Father. But it could not have been truly said of the persons to whom Jesus was now speaking, that they did not know the deity and eternal perfections of the Father. The Jews were thoroughly possessed of this knowledge. It follows that the knowledge relating to the Son, which no one but the Father had, was not the knowledge of *his* deity and eternal perfections. The view taken of this passage by Trinitarians, is not only groundless; but, as is very common in their methods of interpretation, it closely borders upon absurdity:—it deprives that, which is otherwise a very just and forcible passage, of almost all point and meaning. What the Jews really did not know concerning the Father, and never could know until Christ had revealed it to them, was the great design of his wisdom and love communicated in the gospel. What no one but the Father knew concerning the Son, therefore, was the part which he was to sustain, the means which he was to employ, the sufferings which he was to undergo, and the glorious success which was to crown his labours, in the fulfilment of this blessed design. Neither in the context, nor in the words themselves, is there any thing like an allusion to the incomprehensible perfections of the divine nature, in regard either to the Son or to the Father. These ideas are suggested

to the minds of Trinitarians by the influence of their own previously admitted system, not by the language of the Scriptures. The words of Christ relate, not to a barren metaphysical dogma, concerning the existence of a plurality of divine persons in the Godhead, but to a solemn practical truth. It is only through the revealed knowledge imparted to us by our Saviour, that we can properly know the Father,—his infinite goodness, his redeeming love, his purposes of grace and salvation for all his sinful creatures.

I next find my reverend opponent quitting the field of Scripture, and betaking himself to that of metaphysics. I have certainly no great inclination to follow him thither, but he draws me after him for a moment. He says that if we acknowledge the Father to be eternal, we must acknowledge the Son to be eternal likewise. Why must we do so? Because *Father* and *Son* are correlative terms, and he says it is a principle that the relative term always involves in it the existence of the correlative; therefore, he says, the very existence of the Father involves in it the existence of the Son, and if the Father be eternal the Son also must be eternal.—I am not sure whether this will be generally recognized as orthodox doctrine; I suspect not, but that does not concern me. I am quite satisfied that, whether it be orthodox or heterodox, it is egregious nonsense. I entreat you to consider it closely, and judge for yourselves if it be not so. I will not venture to speak of the absurdity of these propositions as I feel that I might do, lest I should possibly wound the pious feelings of any of my hearers. But I refer you to the Scriptures, (Hebrews ch. 1. v. 5.) “Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee.” Does not that prove that the Father existed before the Son? Moreover, I ask you, if you were called on to mention any two terms in the language which necessarily imply that the objects of them must *co-exist* whether Father and Son are not the very last terms which you would ever have fixed upon for such a purpose? Do you feel it absolutely impossible to conceive, that a Father might exist before his own Son? I may be told, perhaps, that such considerations, which are drawn from human connexions, do not apply to the divine nature. I willingly grant it; but remember it was not I who produced this absurd argument. My opponent has no right to affix his own arbitrary meaning to the terms Father and Son, as applied to God and to Jesus Christ, and then out of that arbitrary meaning to weave such a subtlety as this. I am as eager to conclude these observations, as I was reluctant to commence them. I will only remark therefore, that feeble as my opponent’s reasoning seems to me on the ground of Scripture, it is, if possible, still more feeble on the ground of metaphysics.

We are next referred to the 22nd and 23rd verses of the 45th chap. of Isaiah:—“Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else; I have

sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, 'That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear,'—as compared with the 10th and 11th verses of the 14th chap. of the Epistle to the Romans, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Now, simply because, in Isaiah, Jehovah declares that every knee shall bow to *him*, and because this is quoted by the apostle Paul, in confirmation of the doctrine that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, therefore my reverend opponent concludes at once that Christ is God. But I ask you, as sober-minded and impartial people, do you see any force in this conclusion? Do you recognise the validity of such arguments as these? Since we know that Christ has been *appointed by God* to judge the world, shall we not bow the knee to God, shall we not give account of ourselves unto God, when we are brought before the judgment seat of Christ? Is not the declaration of Jehovah in this way strictly fulfilled, without implying, in the smallest degree, that Christ himself is Jehovah? This, again, is one of those arguments, of which I told you that I should content myself with examining a few only of each kind. I am not afraid that such an argument will carry conviction to the mind of any unprejudiced inquirer. I answer it, by simply referring you to the 5th chap. of John's Gospel, where it is declared that "the Father hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son; and to the 17th chap. of the Acts of the Apostles, where it is declared that "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath *ordained*, or, as the original should rather be rendered, "by *a man*," by a human being, "whom he hath ordained."

We are in the next place referred to the 56th verse of the 78th Psalm. "Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies,"—as compared with the 9th verse of the 10th chap. of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." Now here again, my reverend opponent argues that because, in the Psalm, it is declared that the person whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness was the most High God, and because, (as my opponent erroneously affirms) the Apostle declares that the person whom the Israelites tempted was Christ, therefore Christ is the most High God. The argument is utterly fallacious, being entirely raised on erroneous suppositions. The Apostle does *not* declare, that the person whom the ancient Israelites tempted was Christ. This is entirely an inference drawn by my reverend opponent. In the first place, the reading of the passage is doubtful. Some ancient manuscripts, and other good authorities, instead of the word "Christ," have the word "Lord,"—"Neither let

us tempt the Lord." If this reading be correct, the argument of course falls entirely to the ground. But I am willing to take our common reading; and I say that the Apostle asserts *no such thing*, as that the person whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness was Christ. He only says, "Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted,"—whom? Not Christ; there is no such word in the original. Something indeed must be supplied; but surely we are bound to supply that which is plainly written in the Psalm, namely, "the most High God." You see, my brethren, that my reverend opponent can make no argument out of this passage, unless he is allowed to insert a word for which he has no authority. What would have been said of me, if I had thus put in a word to make out my argument? My opponent would have assumed his very pleasantest tone and manner, and he would have said, "If now I should permit the Socinian just to take a pencil, and insert the little word '*Christ*' in this place, then indeed it would furnish him with an argument, but not otherwise;" or if he had chanced to be in a different mood, he would have uttered solemn denunciations against the wicked *audacity* of the man, who could dare thus "to add to the word of God."

Our attention is, in the next place, directed to the 1st. v. of the 23d Psalm:—"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,"—as compared with the 10th chap. of John's Gospel, where Christ declares that *he* is "the good *shepherd*," and that there shall be "one fold and one shepherd." This is surely a most trifling argument. Because David, to illustrate the care and tenderness of God towards him, calls the Lord his *shepherd*, and because our Saviour adopts the same simple allusion, to illustrate his care and tenderness towards his Church, therefore my reverend opponent would conclude at once that Christ must be God. Do you perceive any force in such an argument? The office of a shepherd, you know, is one of the commonest and simplest that can be imagined. Does it follow, that because a metaphor is borrowed from this subject, to illustrate both the kindness of God and the compassionate tenderness of Christ, that therefore Christ and God must be one and the same being? My reverend opponent, I find, has recommended to me the study of Watts's Logic; he thinks it may do me good. Perhaps it may; I may then be able to see the accuracy of his method of reasoning; at present, I confess, he appears to me to be one of the most inconclusive reasoners that ever took a great and serious argument in hand.

We are next assured that Christ must be God, because he took upon himself to change or abolish the institutions of Jehovah. We know, from the Old Testament, that Jehovah appointed the Jewish Passover, and the Sabbath; but Christ, we are told, of his own authority abolished these divine institutions, and superseded them by others of his *own* appointment; therefore, it is inferred, Christ must be equal to Jehovah:

Nay, here I object again, that this is not the strict logical inference. If Christ, *of his own authority*, could rightfully abolish the institutions of Jehovah, and substitute for them institutions of his own, the proper inference is, not that Christ is *equal* with Jehovah, but that he is *greater* than Jehovah. All which an *equal* being could do, of his own independent authority, would be to set up other institutions, which might co-exist with those of Jehovah. But if Christ, as you say, of his own authority abolished the ordinances of God, and set up others in their stead, the strict inference is, either that he did that which was wrong, or that he must be *greater* than God. Seriously, my Christian friends, is there any strength, is there any propriety, in this argument, when all the circumstances are considered? Jesus Christ is sent into the world as the chosen messenger of God; a voice from heaven proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him;" he proceeds to work the most astonishing miracles, in proof of his divine authority; he tells you positively, that "the Father hath given him a *commandment*, what he should say, and what he should speak." On these grounds he assumes to abolish the institutions of the old dispensation, and to establish new and better institutions in their place. Upon which you charge him with claiming an equality with that Almighty Being, *in whose name he had told you that he spoke and acted*. Is this reasonable? I doubt, if the most sober-minded believers in the Trinitarian doctrine would approve of such a method of arguing.

I will next examine an objection of my opponent to some observations formerly advanced by me. He had appealed, in proof of the omnipresence of Christ, to the 20 v. of the 18th chap. of Matthew. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." I replied, that this passage should be understood with especial reference to the case of the twelve Apostles in the discharge of their divine mission. My reverend opponent now says, that this is the most gratuitous assumption he ever heard of. It certainly was not *gratuitous*, because I distinctly gave you my *reasons* for taking this view of the passage. I said, and I say again, that this 20th verse should be understood of the Apostles alone, in respect to the discharge of their Apostolic office, because the two or three verses preceding, with which this verse is closely connected, do most unquestionably relate to the Apostles alone. Let us read those verses. "Verily, I say unto you, (v. 18), whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Has such divine authority been given to the disciples of Jesus in all ages? Do not all Christians, Catholic and Protestant, understand this in reference to the Apostles *exclusively*? Again;—"I say unto you, (v. 19), That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of

my Father which is in heaven." Is this a promise which the ordinary disciples of Jesus, in all times and places, can take to themselves without presumption? Is not this, likewise, universally understood to relate to the Apostles alone, in the discharge of their divine functions? But if it be so, the twentieth verse does most surely relate to the Apostles exclusively, because it is introduced as a pledge, as a confirmation, of what is said in the preceding verses :—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name; there am I in the midst of them." You see therefore, that my interpretation of this passage, whether right or wrong, is not perfectly *gratuitous*. In connection with this passage, I likewise offered some remarks on the 24th v. of the 20th chap. of Exodus; "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." I stated that this could not relate to the real omnipresence even of Jehovah, but to his communication of spiritual favours and blessings to his faithful worshippers. I argued that it must be understood in this way, because Jehovah here promises that he will *come* unto his people; and we know that, in regard to his *actual omnipresence*, God does not and cannot *come*, or *go*, to or from any place; for in this sense he is at all times in all places. The promise must relate to the especial manifestation of his mercy and favour to the minds of sincere worshippers. If there be any parallel between the two passages, therefore, (though I can see little or none), it will rather tend to set aside, than to confirm, the Trinitarian interpretation, which refers the promise in the Gospel to the real *personal omnipresence* of Christ. How does my reverend opponent answer these observations? He does *not* answer them; he could not answer them. But he does that, which he can always do when argument fails him. He declaims about something totally beside the question, and insinuates disgraceful charges against his opponent. He exclaims, "What, Sir, are you going to deny the omnipresence of the Eternal Jehovah, in order to deny the omnipresence of Christ!" My brethren, let me ask you, Do you see any sense or justice whatever in that remark? Because, for particular reasons which I state, I think it necessary to interpret a certain expression, in a certain passage of Scripture, not of the real omnipresence of God, but of the manifestation of his favour to the hearts of his creatures, does it therefore follow that I must mean to deny altogether the omnipresence of God? Is there any justice in such an insinuation against me on these grounds? None at all; but this is another of the arts of controversy. How weak and deluded must be the minds of those men, who think that the spread of divine truth can be permanently checked by such means.

I now proceed to examine the observations of my opponent, on the interpretation which I supported of the 6th v. of the 9th chap. of Isaiah.

I endeavoured to shew, that all the epithets which occur in this verse are, according to Scriptural usage, fairly susceptible of a meaning which does not imply the proper deity of the person to whom they are ascribed. I argued, in particular, that the words translated "Mighty God," are words both of which in other parts of Scripture, are applied to human beings; and that the latter word often signifies nothing more than a strong, powerful, or mighty person. My reverend opponent, as I understand him, now denies the truth of these statements. He says, that these two words are in Scripture a *distinctive designation* of Jehovah. He *says* this; but, in my opinion, he does not, and cannot, *prove* it. He refers to three passages of Scripture, only one of which (Isaiah, ch. 10, v. 21,) is at all to his purpose; because in this passage alone do the two words occur *together*, so as to have the least appearance of a *distinctive designation*. In the other two passages (Deuteronomy, ch. 10, v. 17, and Jeremiah, ch. 32, v. 18), the same two words do indeed occur, in reference to Jehovah, but not immediately together, only in the midst of other epithets, such as "great," "terrible," which no one can doubt may be given to other persons besides God. This appears even in the English translation of the passage in Deuteronomy; but in the original it is so in both passages. Now, there is no question, you must remember, that these epithets may be applied to Jehovah; all which we contend for is, that they *may also be applied*, and *are applied*, in Scripture, to other persons, to human beings; and therefore that in themselves they carry no evidence of the proper deity of the person to whom they are applied. But my reverend opponent affects not to know of any principle, by which he may determine when these epithets apply to God, and when to some other person. I answer, By the very same principle, by which we are left to determine the application of a thousand other words, which are sometimes used in reference to God, and sometimes in reference to other persons. We must be guided always by the context, and by other general considerations. When I read that the person (Isaiah, ch. 9, v. 6), to whom the Hebrew word, (לֵבִי) is applied, is declared to be a *child that was to be born*, I conclude that he is not Jehovah; on the very same principle on which I conclude that king Nebuchadnezzar is not Jehovah, although the very same Hebrew word is applied to him, (Ezekiel, ch. 31, v. 11); on the very same principle on which I conclude, likewise, that certain other persons are not each of them Jehovah, although both the words which occur in the 9th of Isaiah are likewise applied to them (Ezekiel, ch. 32, v. 21). My reverend opponent is not a man of such simplicity, as to be wholly ignorant of this principle, which is necessary to the rational interpretation of almost every page of the Bible. Yet he positively declares that the words which occur in the 9th of Isaiah, "can be translated no other way," than "Mighty God," and that they "can apply to no other person than Jehovah." Martin Luther thought other-

wise ; for, as I stated to you in a former Lecture, he has translated the words, *strong, hero*. Gesenius, who is probably the greatest Hebrew scholar in the world, gives a similar translation. But these great men will perhaps be declared by my reverend opponent, (as he declares of Arians and Socinians), "miserably deficient indeed" in their knowledge of the Hebrew language. I can discover no qualifications in him which entitle him to talk in this presumptuous strain. In my former observations on the prophecy in Isaiah, I stated that the same word which is there applied to the Messiah, and translated "God," is applied to Moses, to Nebuchadnezzar, and to various other persons. What says my reverend opponent to this? He exclaims that "there is not an instance in the whole Scripture, in which Moses is called "Mighty God." Who ever said there was? Then again, he exclaims, after reading the passage in Ezekiel, that "Nebuchadnezzar is not called Mighty God."—Who ever said he was? I read the passage to you, in which Nebuchadnezzar is styled "mighty one of the heathen ;" and therefore I could not have been so stupid as to represent that he was there called "Mighty God." What I stated to you was, that the very same Hebrew word, which is applied to Christ in the 6th of Isaiah, and translated "God," is likewise applied to Moses, and to Nebuchadnezzar, in which latter instance it is translated "mighty one." This is undeniably true ; and I contend that my argument on this passage remains unshaken.

I will, in the next place, examine my opponent's further remarks on the proposed Unitarian reading of the 5th v. of the 9th ch. of the Epistle to the Romans. My answer to this Trinitarian argument was, that, without taking any unwarrantable liberty with the Scriptures, we may apply the latter part of this verse, not to Christ, but to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may close the sentence at the word "came ;" and take the remainder of the verse, either as a doxology, thus, "God, who is over all, be blessed for ever ;" or otherwise we may take it, (which method of reading the passage I told you that I preferred), as a simple assertion, thus, "He who was over all was God blessed for ever." My reverend opponent first inquires, whether I have the authority of the Holy Ghost for thus altering the Scriptures? My brethren, he knows perfectly well, that the *punctuation* of the Scriptures is not the work of the Holy Ghost. Nobody believes this, whatever views they may entertain of the inspiration of the Scriptures. There is neither justice nor sense, therefore, in my opponent's insinuation. I must have been hard driven, before I could have stooped to ask such an invidious question of him. I answer, however, that I have precisely the same authority for supporting a different punctuation of this passage, as he has for supporting the common punctuation. He further inquires, whether I have ever seen the autographs of the Apostles? I again throw myself on your recollection, whether I have said one word about

the autographs of the Apostles? What I did say was this,—that the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament in existence, are without punctuation, and even without space between the words; and therefore that the whole business of pointing, and arranging the sentences of Scripture, being the work of uninspired men, is a fair subject of rational and sober criticism. This is what I said; and though, after the experience I have had, I can scarcely affirm what my reverend opponent will not do, I think he will hardly venture to contradict these plain facts. But, as usual, he endeavours to hide the truth in needless declamation about the autographs of the Apostles! My reverend opponent next delivers a remark on this subject, which for gross inaccuracy will not be easily matched. He says he will “tell me that every Manuscript, every Version, every Father, every Heretic, agrees in adopting the very punctuation of this text which occurs in our version!” Yes!—he may “tell” me this a thousand times over;—I shall not believe it once, because I know it to be most erroneous. Yet, what does it signify whether I will believe this assertion?—nine-tenths of those to whom it was addressed *did* believe it implicitly; and the purpose was answered. I would request any of my respected brethren in the ministry, Churchmen or Dissenters, just to look either at Griesbach’s or Wetstein’s note on this passage, but particularly the latter, and then to tell me, whether my reverend opponent’s assertions on matters of this kind are worthy of a moment’s reliance. There are few passages of Scripture to be found, in which the punctuation, by the Fathers and other ancient Christian writers, is more unsettled. The learned editors of the New Testament to whom I have referred, in their notes on the passage, have collected abundant evidence of this fact. Wetstein, in particular, has shewn that some of the most distinguished ornaments of the Christian Church in early times, expressly denied that Christ is ever called “God over all;” and consequently they never could have read the passage as my opponent does, but must have read it in the manner which Unitarians approve. As authority for putting a full-stop after the word *σὰρκα*, *flesh*, and taking the rest of the verse as a separate sentence, Griesbach quotes not only an ancient Manuscript, but “*Multi Patres qui Christum τον επι παντων θεον appellari posse negant*,”—“many of the Fathers, who deny that Christ can be called God over all.” So monstrously inaccurate are the statements to which you have been listening, and in which many of you doubtless thought you might place entire confidence. My opponent further says, that I took my suggestion concerning this passage either from the “Improved Version,” or from Mr. Locke; and he says that he thinks he has several times *detected* me in going to the Improved Version. Only think, my brethren, of *detecting* a minister of the gospel in looking into such a shocking book as a critical edition of the New Testament! But here my opponent’s acuteness, mar-

vellous as it is, has for once misled him ; for I declare that I have never had the "Improved Version" in my hand during this controversy. The book is no great favourite of mine, nor ever was ; though I am persuaded, that a great deal which Trinitarian disputants have said against it is false and ridiculous. But then, it seems, if I did not take my alteration of this text from the Improved Version, I must have taken it from Mr. Locke. Now I think you must allow, that if I had done so, I need not be greatly ashamed of my authority. Wiser men than either I or my opponent have been content to learn of John Locke. It so happens, however, that Mr. Locke's reading of this passage is somewhat different, both from the common version, and from either of those which I have suggested ; so that here again my reverend opponent's acuteness misleads him. He further says, on this subject, that the alteration of this passage which I have supported betrays a grievous ignorance of the simplest principles of the Greek language. I told you he would say so ; but I am most happy to find him now giving his *reasons* for this assertion. I am always delighted when he condescends to do this. I know that as long as he deals in bare *assertions*, he has greatly the advantage over me ; because he is addressing an audience who will implicitly believe almost every thing that he says, and very little indeed that I say. But whenever I see that he is about to state his *reasons*, I always begin to hope that the advantage will soon be on my side. He has done so in this case, and I will examine his reasons. First, he says, that in order to justify the translation of this passage as a doxology, the Unitarian must be allowed to change the order of the words in the original ; to take the word (*ευλογητος*) "blessed," out of its present position at the end of the clause, and remove it towards the beginning. This I think is a mistake, and I will endeavour to shew that it is. I grant, indeed, that if it were not for some peculiar circumstances, which call for a different construction, the word, (*ευλογητος*), "blessed," in a doxology, would most likely be placed at the beginning. But I deny that it *must* necessarily be placed there ; and I say that here there *are* the peculiar circumstances which call for a different construction. I may observe, however, that one clear example has been pointed out, in the Septuagint version of the 19th v. of the 68th Psalm, in which this word is placed at the end of the clause, though there seems to be there *no* particular reason for such a construction. In the instance before us, however, I apprehend that the participle, *ευλογητος*, is necessarily placed where it is, on account of its connection with the other words, (*εις τους αιωνας*), with which it forms a phrase, "*blessed for ever*." (See Romans, l. v. 25.) You know that in our own language, as indeed in all languages, when certain words are as it were, linked together in a phrase, the order in which they stand to one another becomes fixed by custom, and cannot be disturbed without great awkwardness. For example, take

our phrase, "in Parliament assembled," which we usually put at the head of petitions to the Houses of Lords and Commons. We could not change the order of the words, and say "assembled in Parliament." And yet if we had to use the very same participle "assembled," even in reference to the very same persons, if it were not in this settled phrase, we might and we should place it in a different part of the sentence. In much the same way, then, I conceive the Greek word which here means "blessed," is linked with the other words which mean "for ever;" and as these latter words must, from custom, be placed at the end of the clause, (especially followed by "Amen,") the former word is placed there likewise, even in a doxology, where otherwise it might naturally enough be placed at the beginning. On these grounds, then, I submit that my reverend opponent's objection is altogether superficial. He further objects, that in order to justify the rendering of this passage as a doxology, the Unitarian must be allowed to insert what he calls the little word "be," or the imperative of the Greek verb, (*εστω*) which signifies "be." This is another mistake, and I will prove it to be so. The Unitarian will need to take no such liberty; for the plain reason, that the sacred writers themselves are not accustomed to insert the said little word "be," in sentences of this kind. Let any one, with the Greek Testament in his hand, turn to the 1st. ch. and 3d v. of the Epistle to the Ephesians:—"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here the Apostle himself has omitted the verb, "be," although the different idiom of our language requires us to insert it, as our translators have done. So again in the 1st Epistle of Peter, ch. 1, v. 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here likewise, by another Apostle, the verb "be" is omitted in the Greek, although it must be supplied in the English. This objection of my reverend opponent, therefore, is worse than superficial. It is an objection which any man of learning, as he is, should have blushed to advance. My opponent has been pleased to say, on one occasion, that he would rather become an infidel at once, than he would have used a certain argument which I employed. I will not be so hard upon him; but I can truly say, that I would much sooner have kept silence, than have stooped to avail myself of such a delusion as this, merely because I happened to be addressing an unlearned audience. On the whole, then, I conclude that my reverend opponent has brought forward no solid objections to the reading of this passage as a doxology to God the Father. But I must again advert to the circumstance, that although I mentioned this as a *justifiable* mode of reading the passage, I told you, in my former Lectures, that I preferred the opinion of those who would read it, not as a doxology, but as a simple assertion, in this way, "He who was over all was God, blessed for ever." What says my opponent to this?—Not a syllable; he has taken not the slightest notice of it in any way.

I will now briefly examine my reverend opponent's remarks upon another passage of Scripture, formerly considered. It is in the 1st chap. and 8th verse of the Epistle to the Hebrews:—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." In the first place, I had observed that the 45th Psalm, from which this sentence is taken, appears to have been originally addressed to Solomon. This my opponent says again is the most gratuitous assumption he ever heard of. He would have you believe that there is not the slightest reason for supposing that it was addressed to Solomon. But I think, if you read the Psalm attentively, you will be of a different opinion. I stated to you before, that the Psalm is generally considered to have been written immediately after the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of a foreign king. Now just read the 9th and following verses, and observe how well they agree with this supposition:—"Kings daughters were among thy honourable women; upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." Does not this relate to Solomon, think you? In the next verse the young queen herself is addressed:—"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy lord, and worship thou him." Then again, in the 16th verse, "instead of thy Father, shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." Does not this relate to the newly wedded queen of Solomon? I think you will now admit, at all events, that the idea of this Psalm having been originally addressed to Solomon is not *quite* so gratuitous an assumption as my opponent would persuade you to believe. But if this was its original application, and if our present translation of the 6th verse, (quoted in "Hebrews"), be correct, the word "*God*" must of course be taken in an inferior sense, as signifying merely *Prince*, or *Ruler*. As I told you, however, I prefer the opinion of those who would translate the passage in this way:—"God is thy throne for ever and ever." My opponent again declares, that such a translation betrays a total ignorance of the construction of the Greek language; and here likewise, fortunately for me, he condescends to give his *reasons*. He says that if this had been the meaning the word (*θεσος*,) "throne," which is what is called the *predicate* in the sentence, must have been without the *article*. Now, that it might, and in the best classical Greek probably would, have been without the article, I will not undertake to deny; but that it *must* have been so, according to Scriptural Greek, I will deny; because I have already referred to a passage in the Septuagint version of the 73rd Psalm, (v. 26), where there is a precisely similar construction, the article being used before both the subject and the predicate, and the order of the words being the same; the meaning of which passage, undoubtedly, is this,—"God is my portion for ever." Perhaps you think, that if my reverend opponent had known of this fact, he would not have been quite

so dogmatical in his assertions. You are mistaken. He cares no more for the authority of the Septuagint Translators, than for the authority of Bishop Lowth, or Grotius, or Erasmus, or any other great scholar. He cares for nothing but his own positive opinions, which he is pleased to call "the Bible;" but which you know are not the Bible, any more than mine or any other man's opinions are the Bible. I venture to say this, because I directed his and your attention to this passage in the Septuagint, in my former Lectures, and my opponent has taken no notice of it. He prefers to go on repeating his own assertions, which have already been confuted. But he further objects, that it would be very absurd to represent God himself as addressing the Son, and saying to him, "God is thy throne for ever and ever." I answer that the Scriptures are chargeable with no such absurdity. The passage, as quoted in "Hebrews," is not said to have been addressed by God to the Son; nor as having ever been uttered by God at all; nor even as ever having been directly addressed to the Son by any person. I stated this also to you, and gave my reasons for it, in the former Lecture. The just rendering of the passage undoubtedly is, not "unto the Son,"—but, "*concerning the Son.*" You will also observe that it is not written, "*God saith,*"—but simply, "*he saith,*" or "*it saith.*" We are left to our own judgments to determine *by whom* this was originally said; and to ascertain this point, we must look to the 45th Psalm. We shall there discover, that it is not God who is represented as uttering these words, but the author of the Psalm, whosoever he was. And again, look to the 7th verse of this 1st chapter of the Hebrews, which relates to the angels, and is exactly parallel in construction to the 8th verse:—"And concerning the angels *he saith,*" or *it saith,* "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." This was certainly never *addressed by God to the angels.* But, again I say, the 7th and 8th verses are exactly parallel in construction. They are, as it were, poised against one another:—"concerning the angels *he saith,*" thus; but concerning the Son *he saith,*" thus. It being certain, then, that the words of the 7th verse were never addressed by God to the angels, why should it be supposed that the words in the 8th verse were ever addressed by God to the Son? The proper meaning of the 8th verse seems to be this: "But concerning the Son, *he saith,*" that is, the writer of the 45th Psalm saith, or the Scripture saith, "God is thy throne for ever and ever." There is no just pretension, therefore, for considering these words as ever having been directly addressed *by the Father to Christ*; and all my opponent's declamation on this point rests on a groundless assumption. Similar observations apply to all that he has said concerning the 10th and two following verses of this 1st ch. of the Hebrews: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth," &c. Those verses are not said by the inspired writer ever to have been addressed to

the Son. They only contain sentiments which in some way relate to the kingdom of the Son ; and what that relation is, I proved in my former Lecture. I conclude therefore, again, that the remarks of my opponent on my interpretation of this passage are altogether insufficient to overthrow it.

On the expressions *Alpha* and *Omega*, "the first and the last," which occur in the Apocalypse, my reverend opponent has given a long reply. He has laboured hard to establish two facts, (neither of which, as it appears to me, has he been able to prove,) namely, that the declaration, "I am Alpha and Omega," is ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Revelation ; and that the other similar expression, "I am the first and the last," where it occurs in Isaiah, denotes the proper *eternity* of God, and therefore must denote the eternity of Christ, when it is applied to him in the Apocalypse. His only argument in support of the former position, seems to be drawn from the consideration that it must be Christ, and not the Father, who is "to come with clouds," and to "come quickly." I may grant this, but it will avail him nothing ; for it is not said, nor intimated, by the writer of the Apocalypse, that the person who is to "come with clouds," and to "come quickly," is the same person who calls himself "Alpha and Omega." Jesus Christ is not speaking in either of the instances where those words are found. Then again, with respect to the expression, "the first and the last," where it occurs in Isaiah, my opponent cannot prove, though he vehemently asserts, that it is used to signify the *eternity* of Jehovah. It appears to me, still, to be used to signify that Jehovah, the true God, was the Author and Finisher of the events spoken of in the prophecy. I am also of opinion, that it has a similar meaning, when applied in the Apocalypse to our Saviour. My opponent, as a Trinitarian, may well believe otherwise, but he has offered no proof that his belief on this point is correct, or that my belief is erroneous.

I think it is in this connexion, (but if in another connexion it is of no consequence,) that I meet with one of those insinuations of my reverend opponent, which it is so painful, but so necessary, for me to notice. He says that I am a person who may very probably *sneer* at all mention of redemption through the precious blood of Christ ; or some expression of this kind. My brethren, what do you say to such insinuations ? Is this the spirit in which it becomes a Clergyman to defend his religious convictions. My respected friends of this Unitarian congregation, I have been your minister for twelve years ; I have preached to you hundreds of Sermons concerning the doctrines and precepts of the gospel. Did *you* ever know me sneer at the precious blood of Christ, or any thing relating to so serious a subject ? Have I not many times pointed out to you, how intimately the suffering and the death of Christ are connected with the truth, the divinity, and the efficacy of the gospel ? Have I not often endeavoured to illustrate this fact to

your understandings, and to bring home the consideration of it to your hearts, to induce you in a suitable manner to love and revere the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us, that by the power of his benevolent sacrifice on the cross, in conjunction with all the other holy influences of his gospel, he might redeem us from iniquity and reconcile us unto God? And now you hear what my opponent says, that I shall be likely to sneer at all mention of the precious blood of Christ! And when he has said this, what does he do? He takes himself away, and declares that he will bestow no notice upon any reply which may be made to his observations! Certain I am, that the strong disapprobation of the generous and candid of all parties will follow him for such conduct.

My reverend opponent has noticed the views which I advanced respecting the passage in the 1st ch. of the Epistle to the Colossians, where it is supposed that proper *creation* is ascribed to Jesus Christ. He says that this cannot relate to a *moral creation*, because it must then have been said that “all *persons*,” and not “all *things*,” were created by him. Is it possible, that he can be ignorant of so common an idiom of the Scriptures, as that of putting *things* for *persons*, or rather, the use of *neuter* adjectives and substantives in reference to *persons*. It is an idiom especially used by this Apostle, and has been observed by all sound commentators. What does my opponent himself understand, where it is written that God would “reconcile all *things* unto himself?” Does not that mean *persons*? Who but *persons* can be reconciled unto God? But my opponent further objects, that it cannot be the moral regeneration of the world which is spoken of in this place, because there is mention made of “all things in *heaven*,” as well as “all things on earth.” He wishes to know who there is in *heaven* that is capable of becoming the subject of a moral creation. All things in heaven, he says, would include the angels, who have never fallen. Now, this he said before, and I have before given a positive demonstration of its fallacy. I have shewn you from the Scriptures, even from the context of this very passage, that whatever is meant by “all things in *heaven*,” they certainly are the subjects of *moral regeneration*, as well as the “things on earth.” Do we not read, in the 20th v., that it is the will of God “to reconcile all things unto himself by Christ, whether they be things in earth, or *things in heaven*?” Do we not also read, in the 1st Chap. of the Epistle to the Ephesians, that it is the will of God “to gather together in one all things in Christ, *both which are in heaven*, and which are on earth?” It is very plain therefore, both that “all *things*” must mean all *persons*, and that the things in *heaven*, as well as the things on *earth*, are the subjects of God’s moral dispensations through the ministry of Jesus Christ. I conclude therefore, again, that the interpretation of this passage in Colossians, which I have defended, cannot be

overthrown. But my opponent wonders, forsooth, how any Arian or Socinian could reply to an Atheist, if he were to propose a similar interpretation of the 1st. chap. of Genesis, or of any other passage of Scripture which treats of the *natural* creation. There is something exceedingly amusing in this remark, inasmuch as every one must perceive that an Atheist, *as such*, would be quite as thoroughly confuted by proving that God is the author of a *moral*, as by proving that he is the author of a *physical* creation. No proper Atheist could believe the one more than the other. It would be an amusing exhibition of folly indeed, to hear any man profess himself an Atheist, and then contend that God is the author *only of a moral création*. It is not worth while for me to gratify my reverend opponent's wonder, by shewing him how I, as a Unitarian, should proceed to confute such an Atheist. Whenever I meet with such an one, I will engage to answer him better than my reverend opponent has answered me.

I come now to examine my opponent's remarks on the subject of the *worship* of Christ. Here again, he calls in an imaginary Atheist to his assistance. He wishes to know, if the 24th v. of the 4th chap. of John's Gospel were to be quoted,—“God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,”—and an Atheist were to object that this does not mean supreme, religious worship,—he wishes to know how, on my principle of reasoning concerning those passages which speak of the worship of Christ, I should be able to confute the said Atheist? In other words, if I understand him rightly, my opponent wishes to know why I conclude, from the simple mention of *worship*, that supreme religious adoration is meant, in the case of the Father, the true God, any more than in the case of Jesus Christ? I answer that I do not draw such a conclusion, *from such premises alone*, in the former case any more than in the latter. I conclude that the Father is to be worshipped *supremely* from these two considerations combined; first, that I am commanded to worship him, and secondly, that I know him to be truly and properly God, a Spiritual and Infinite Being; and therefore I know, that the only worship which is suitable to be offered to *him*, must be the supreme, religious adoration of the soul. But in the case of Jesus Christ, the latter of these two considerations does not exist, to my conviction. I do *not* know, and I do not believe, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God; and *therefore* I do not conclude that the homage which I am bound to pay *him* is to be supreme, religious adoration. In short, as I have explained to you before, the term “*worship*” is employed with so much latitude in the Scriptures, that we must in all cases judge of the *kind* of worship or homage intended, by what we know, on other grounds, of the nature and dignity of the person who is said to be worshipped. This, therefore, is the way in which I should proceed to confute the Atheist; if, again, I should ever

meet with an Atheist foolish enough, to argue with me respecting the *kind* of worship to be offered to a Being whom he did not believe to exist!

When treating of this subject in my former Lectures, I had to examine the instance of Stephen, who is thought to have offered religious worship to Christ in his dying moments. I do not perceive that my reverend opponent has given any substantial confutation of my views of that passage; but in the course of my remarks, I happened to say, that "I apprehended no Jew would have addressed solemn prayer to Jehovah without *kneeling*," and that Stephen did not kneel until after he had said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." My opponent, I find, has seized upon this unimportant remark with great eagerness, and has triumphantly shewn how very ignorant I must be of the Scriptures to have made such an observation. It was a mere hasty, unpremeditated observation, which occurred to my mind at the moment of speaking. I now clearly perceive, and I am quite ready to confess, that I cannot support it by any sufficient authority. I must again observe however, in justice to myself, that it was a very *unimportant* observation, which did not in the slightest degree affect my general argument upon the conduct of Stephen.

But I have now to call your attention to a trifling mistake on the part of my opponent. To shew the latitude with which the term *worship* is employed in the Scriptures, I had referred to the 20th v. of the 29th chap. of the 1st. Book of Chronicles, where the congregation of Israel are said to have bowed down their heads, and *worshipped*, at the same time, the Lord Jehovah, and the king; that is, as I stated, king David. My reverend opponent declares that this is one of the most *gratuitous* things he ever heard of in his life. He says that "the king," who is here mentioned, is not David, but Jehovah himself, that "the Lord, and the king" mean the same person! It will be evident to every one who looks at the passage, that, at all events, the authors of our common version understood the passage as I have represented it; for they have translated it so as clearly to convey this sense. We read that "the people bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord, and the king;" inserting a *comma* after the word "Lord," using the conjunction "and," and putting a small k in the word "king." But I contend moreover, that it will be evident to any one who looks at the original Hebrew, that the passage could be properly rendered in no other way than as our translators have given it, so as to make the Lord and the king signify two different persons. It is not, (ליהוה למלך), but it is, (ליהוה ולמלך), it is not, "the LORD, the King," but it is, "the LORD, and the king." For a similar construction in the Hebrew, we may look to the 21st. v. of the 24th chap. of the Proverbs. "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change." On the other hand, for such a construction in the

Hebrew, as would probably have been found in this passage of the Chronicles, if the meaning of it had been what my reverend opponent so strangely imagines, we may look to the 6th v. of the 98th Psalm : " Make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King." If I thought that my words would reach the ears of any of my respected brethren in the Ministry, I would beg the favour of their turning to their Hebrew Bibles, and observing the copulative particle, (*וְ*, *and*,) before the latter word, in this passage of the Chronicles ; and then let them tell me, whether my reverend opponent is precisely the man who is best entitled to fling about his charges of "gross ignorance," and "miserable deficiency," against those who differ from him in the interpretation of a passage of Scripture. If he made his observations on this subject thoughtlessly and recklessly, *that* is one thing ; but if he did examine the passage, and consider what he was saying, when he declared that the king here mentioned does not mean king David, but Jehovah, then I say that he has made one of the most extraordinary blunders that was ever made by a professedly learned man. Now, I am willing to make my reverend opponent an offer ; and I consider it to be a very generous offer on my part. If he will forgive me my *great* mistake, in supposing that the Jews always knelt when they prayed to Jehovah, I will forgive him his *little* mistake in confounding Jehovah with king David.

I have only further to observe, on this subject, that my opponent has indulged in a long tirade, against what he is pleased to consider as my absurdity in believing that there are *two kinds of worship* mentioned in the Scriptures, a higher and a lower kind of worship. He says that, on this principle, I ought to become a Roman Catholic ! My brethren, he knows perfectly well that, whether I am right or wrong in my views of the worship due to Christ, that there certainly are two, and more than two, kinds of worship mentioned in the Scriptures. The fact cannot be unknown to any intelligent reader of the Bible. It must be so, because human beings, others besides Jesus Christ, are said to be worshipped, as well as God ; and the same Greek verb is employed. The plain truth appears to be, that as in the case of the word "Lord," (which I explained in the last Lecture), the same Greek word is used in the New Testament to represent *two* different Hebrew verbs, one of which means properly to *worship*, in the highest sense, and the other simply to *bow down to*, or to render obeisance. I conclude therefore, again, that the views which I before advanced, respecting the worship of Christ, have received no solid confutation.

I have now to make a few observations on my text. and then immediately conclude. Jesus says to his disciples, " I and my Father are one."

My reverend opponent represents the Unitarian interpretation of this passage to be, that *Christ and God are of one opi-*

nion! that they agree in opinion! When and where, I ask, has any Unitarian spoken or written in this manner? When did any Unitarian ever talk so vainly, as to speak of the *opinion* of Almighty God? Never; it is altogether the invention of my opponent; an invention well adapted to bring contempt upon that which he will not find it so easy to confute. The Unitarian interpretation is, that Christ here speaks of a moral unanimity of purpose and operation between himself and the Father, not founded, as my opponent strangely represents, on any mere *agreement of opinion* between the two, but upon the entire conformity and submission of the will of Christ to the supreme will of the Father, in all things concerning human redemption; so that the promises of Christ, made in his Father's name, would assuredly be fulfilled: But here my reverend opponent has recourse to another strange misrepresentation. He says, there would be no sense in this declaration of Christ, unless on the implied supposition that, if he were not thus one with the Father, he, Jesus Christ, would be able to *thwart and frustrate the intentions of the Father*? Yes, my opponent tells you, that when a person makes a declaration that he and another are unanimous, especially when he makes this declaration to inspire security that a certain thing which he promises shall come to pass, there would be no meaning in such a declaration, unless upon the supposition that, if the two were *not* unanimous, he who makes the declaration could thwart and frustrate the intentions of the other. I answer confidently, that it is no such thing. This representation of my opponent is grounded on a perfect fallacy. It is astonishing, that intelligent people should listen to such sophistry for a moment, without immediately detecting and despising it. It does *not* follow, when any person makes such a declaration as we here attribute to Christ, that he, the person speaking, would otherwise be able to thwart the intentions of him with whom he declares himself to be unanimous. It only follows, at the utmost, that if they were not thus unanimous, *one of the two might thwart the purposes of the other*. It is not necessary that this power should be in the person *speaking*; on the contrary, it may just as well be in the person *of whom he speaks*. It is, in fact, precisely so in the present case. If Christ were not, as he really is, perfectly one with the Father in design and operation concerning human redemption, then indeed the Father might thwart, or might fail to bring to pass, the promise of Christ made in his name. And who can doubt that it would be so? But we are sure, that the mind of Christ was in no respect at variance with the will of God. He was one with the Father, through his perfect knowledge of the Father's purposes; and therefore the Father will not frustrate, will not fail to accomplish, but will certainly bring to pass, all which Christ hath promised to his faithful disciples. This is the true meaning and spirit of our Saviour's declaration. My

opponent may pervert it if he will; but he can only pervert it, as we have seen, through the use of as weak a fallacy as ever was resorted to by man.

That the sense which we put upon this saying of our Lord is correct, seems to be plainly indicated by his justification of himself to the Jews, when they immediately accused him of blasphemy:—"Is it not written in your Law, (v. 34,) I said ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" What is meant by being "sanctified," and "sent into the world," may be learnt from other parts of this Gospel, where Jesus prays that his disciples may be "sanctified," and declares that "he sent them into the world" as his "Father had sent him." These expressions, you see, refer to a divine mission, and to inspired qualifications for the fulfilment of that mission. On these grounds, therefore, and not on the assumption of natural deity, our Lord himself justifies the language in which he had spoken of his *oneness* with the Father. The same thing is manifest from the words in which he repeats his declaration, in the following verses, (37 and 38); "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." By "the Father being in him," and he "in the Father," Jesus must here mean the same thing as being *one* with the Father; otherwise there is no force in his reply to the Jews. Now what is meant by this may again be easily seen from other parts of this Gospel, where Jesus says to his disciples, "Abide in me, and I in you;"—that is, be careful to keep yourself in union with me, by faith, love and obedience. Such therefore, again, if we may be allowed to receive an explanation from his own lips, was the oneness of our Saviour with his heavenly Father, a moral union of soul and purpose, not of natural power and essence. The same thing is manifest from the meaning of similar language where it occurs in other parts of Scripture. The apostle Paul says, that he and Apollos were "one,"—using the very same form of expression as the Evangelist has recorded of Jesus. "I have planted," he says to the Corinthians, "Apollos watered; now he that planteth, and he that watereth, *are one*." He also assures the Galatians that there is no longer any distinction of "Jew or Gentile, bond or free," for that they "*are all one* in Christ Jesus." Finally, our Lord himself prays that his disciples may all "*be one*," even as he and the Father are one. In each of these cases respectively, do we not understand that the union spoken of is simply a union of mind, interest, and operation? We only require, therefore, that all human systems and arbitrary suppositions should be laid aside, and that our Lord and his Apostles be regarded as their own sufficient

interpreters. Let this be done,—and the Unitarian doctrine of the spiritual union between the one true God, even the Father, and the man Christ Jesus, in opposition to the Trinitarian doctrine of the two natures of Christ, will then be established upon the solid and only proper foundation of Scriptural authority.

I am sorry, my brethren, to have detained you so long this evening ; but I was desirous of getting through as many arguments as possible, as I am resolved to deliver only one Lecture more. In my next and last Lecture, I shall enter into an examination of some charges which have been advanced by my opponent against the *moral influences* of our doctrines ; and I shall also examine some accusations which he has brought against certain eminent professors of the Unitarian faith. In the mean time, let me exhort you to consider these things, with a pure and earnest desire, through the gracious help of God, to come to the knowledge of the truth.

LECTURE SIXTH.

COLOSSIANS, 2ND CH. AND 9TH V.

“FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE
GODHEAD BODILY.”

IN my two preceding Lectures, my Christian friends, I have examined a large proportion of the arguments,—I think I have examined all the weighty and forcible arguments,—advanced by my reverend opponent in his late discourses. I have taken notice of the principal objections which he has urged against my own previous arguments. I have endeavoured to shew that those objections are futile or inconclusive, and that oftentimes the assertions as to matters of fact, on which they were founded, are altogether incorrect. It does not appear to me necessary, I confess, that I should take up much more time on this branch of the subject. I know there were many texts brought forward by my opponent which I have not specially examined. But I declare to you again, as I have said before, that the evidence supposed to be contained in them appears to me precisely of the same sort, as that which is supposed to exist in other passages which I have examined. Therefore, if my previous observations on such fallacious reasoning have at all satisfied your minds, there can be no occasion for me to examine more arguments of the same nature. On the other hand, if my former remarks have not satisfied you, it is not likely that I shall now succeed by mere repetition. I shall therefore confine myself, in this respect, to an examination of the passage which I have read as my text, and then proceed at once to more general topics. I will examine this passage, on the principle to which I alluded in a former Lecture, that I would consider every text which I know, from experience and observation, is generally felt to contain a forcible argument. I will also examine this passage because my reverend opponent has said that this alone ought to decide the controversy.

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*.” The word translated “*bodily*,” means *verily, truly, really*. It implies *reality*, in opposition to mere appearance or pretension. I am aware, that this passage is commonly understood as a clear declaration of the deity of Christ. I will endeavour to prove to you that there is no authority from the Scriptures for regarding the words in this light. Let us first look to the context. The Apostle is exhorting his readers to remain steadfast in the simplicity of their faith; not to allow their minds to be corrupted by philosophy and vain deceit, but to continue “rooted and built up in Christ, established in the faith as they had been taught.” He then puts forward the statement in the text as a reason, as a justification, for acting in this manner. Now, if we refer to the preceding chapter, which in fact is in the same connection, we shall see that the Apostle is there urging the same considerations; and that he there makes use of a similar, but not exactly the same, form of expression. He there says of Christ, “it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell”. Can any reasonable person doubt, that the “fulness” of which the Apostle speaks in the text, is the same as that of which he had spoken in the first chapter? The object, for which the declaration is made, appears to be the same in both places; the essential parts of the expression, the noun and the verb, are the same, in the original as well as in the English version. Can we doubt, then, that the latter is but a repetition of the former, in order to impress the truth more deeply on the minds of the Colossians? It is a peculiarity of this writer’s style, that when he has fallen upon a forcible and apt expression, he becomes as it were fond of it, and repeats it shortly afterwards, though in general with some slight variation. The second passage, therefore, should be interpreted by the help of the first. But from this consideration it will follow, that the words of the text cannot relate to any *essential deity* belonging to Christ; because in the former passage it is expressly affirmed that this fulness, whatever it be, dwells in Christ entirely *through the pleasure of God*, even *the Father*, as I think the meaning is justly given by our translators: “It pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell”. It is plain from this, that the fulness which dwelt in Christ was bestowed upon him by the Father; there was a time when it did not belong to him; he was possessed of it at length, only because it was the good pleasure of God that he should possess it, for carrying the designs of his mercy into effect. It is plain that such expressions could never have been used of any proper, essential deity, which if it had belonged to Christ at all, must have belonged to him from all eternity, independently of the will and pleasure of the Father. I conclude therefore, from this parallel passage, that the fulness which resided in Christ was not, as the Trinitarian supposes, the infinite, incommunicable perfection of deity, but only that

plenitude of *divine gifts and graces*, which he had received of his heavenly Father. Still, it may possibly be thought that "the fulness of the Godhead," is too strong an expression to imply any thing less than true and proper deity. I think it is not so. Let me refer you to a passage in this same writer's epistle to the Ephesians, (Chap. 3 v. 19): "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that *ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*" Can it with any shew of reason be pretended, that "the fulness of God" is not as strong an expression as "fulness of the Godhead," or "of divinity?" Can any one doubt, that we have here another instance of that peculiarity which I have mentioned, as belonging to the style of this Apostle,—a repetition of the same favourite thought, by slightly varying the phraseology? It will be readily acknowledged, however, that "the fulness of God," for which the Apostle prays in behalf of the Christian believers at Ephesus, was not the divine nature; it was not infinite and eternal perfection; it was only an abundance of divine gifts and graces. If we lay aside all prejudice of system, therefore, we must understand that "fulness of the Godhead," does not mean proper divine nature, but it means a fulness of that wisdom and holiness which proceed from God, and are as it were emanations from his all-glorious perfection. That which the Apostle prays *may* belong to the Ephesians, he declares *does* belong to Christ. If there were any need to strengthen this interpretation, it might be done by considering, that in whatever "the fulness" of Christ consisted, the Scriptures declare that it might be communicated, and was communicated, to his disciples. In the very passage before us, after declaring that "in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," the writer adds, "and ye are *complete* in him." Our translators, indeed, have rendered the passage in such a manner as to conceal the fact, that there is a continuation of the same phraseology; but in the original this is evident; the same words, radically, are employed, and the passage might perhaps be justly rendered in this way:—"In Christ truly dwelleth all the fulness of divinity; and ye also are filled by him." To the same effect are the words of the Apostle John, who in speaking of Jesus says, "Of his fulness have all we received, grace upon grace; for the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Again therefore I conclude, that in this the "fulness" of Christ consisted, not in the absolute perfection of deity, (of which his disciples could never have partaken,) but in the fulness of his divine endowments and qualifications for his heavenly office, fulness of wisdom, holiness, and favour with God. Any one who carefully attends to the passages, will easily perceive how well this sense of the words harmonizes with the general context.

Before I enter, my brethren, on the important general considerations, with which I shall principally occupy your

attention this evening, there are a few general topics of very inferior consequence, which it may be well to dispose of at once and together. My reverend opponent has interspersed his last discourse with many *tales*, concerning both the living and the dead. I think it my duty to take a passing notice of the chief of these, in order to expose what I consider to be the injurious misrepresentations in which he has indulged.

First, then, of something which he has said concerning myself. In setting forth what he is pleased to denominate "the evil and withering influences of the Unitarian faith," he has thought proper to hold me up as an example of its sad effects. Unitarianism, he says, leads to Scepticism;—and in proof of this he alludes to certain expressions which fell from me, when addressing you in my former course of Lectures. Now you know that *Scepticism* is popularly considered a very serious charge. When any one brings forward such a charge therefore, directly, personally, against an individual living in the midst of those whom he is addressing, he is bound to produce some very clear and substantial evidence of its truth. I will state to you the proof which my reverend opponent has produced of *my* Scepticism. Having given you my opinion on some serious subject under consideration, on which I knew that others entertained a different opinion, I simply expressed myself in this manner: "God alone knows who is right," or, "God alone knows whether I am right," or in some words to the same effect. Therefore, says my reverend opponent, the Unitarian doctrine evidently leads to scepticism, and I am an example of its sceptical influence! Now I feel persuaded that any comment which I could offer upon this remark, might only tend to weaken the impression which I confess that I wish it should make on your minds. I will therefore leave it entirely to your own candid thoughts. I will only observe, that if my reverend opponent imagines I have any misgiving, any wavering, as to the truth of my Unitarian views, he is exceedingly mistaken. I am not able to conceive of any conviction of the human mind, on any moral subject, being more clear, more settled and determined, than is my own conviction respecting the sole deity of the Father, and the simple humanity of Jesus Christ. But at the same time I know that I am but a fallible creature; I shrewdly suspect that my reverend opponent may be no better; and therefore I am content to say that "God alone really *knows* who is right." So long as it shall please heaven to preserve me in the exercise of my rational faculties, I hope I shall never be ashamed to utter the sentiment, which my opponent has thought proper to condemn as a manifest proof of scepticism.

In the next place, my reverend opponent, I find, has directed the attention of his hearers to a passage in the "Theological Repository," which he says was written by Dr. Priestley, and to another passage in the "Calm Inquiry concerning the

Person of Christ," written by the late Mr. Belsham, in order to prove that Unitarianism tends to degrade the Saviour. With regard to the passage in the "Theological Repository," I have not been able to fix upon it with certainty. I hope it was represented by my opponent more correctly than, as I will hereafter shew you, he has represented another particular connected with Dr. Priestley. One act of extreme disingenuousness, however, on the part of my opponent, I can discover even in this matter. He says that Dr. Priestley wrote the passage alluded to under a fictitious name, being ashamed to take the responsibility of holding such sentiments, by publishing them under his real name. How then, let me ask, does my opponent know that Dr. Priestley was the author of that passage? I will tell you how he knows it; and then you shall judge of his candour as a disputant. He must have learnt it from Dr. Priestley's own *express acknowledgment*, made in the pages of the very work from which the passage is extracted. Dr. Priestley therein tells the reader, that he was the author of all the articles to which certain signatures are attached. Is not this an admirable specimen of fairness? You charge a man with being ashamed to publish certain sentiments under his own name, when the only means by which you learn that he *did* publish them, is through his own express acknowledgment, recorded in the same book!

With regard to the passage in Mr. Belsham's "Calm Inquiry," in which he pursues some vain speculations concerning the perfect sinlessness of Christ, I have not one word to say in its defence. I abandon it totally to the utmost disapprobation. I find it hard to conceive, that the passage can well be more offensive to the feelings of my opponent, or any other Trinitarian, than it is to my own feelings. I hold that the perfect righteousness, the spotless innocence and holiness, of our Saviour's character, is an undeniable and most important principle of the gospel. Nevertheless, having known Mr. Belsham well, and enjoyed his friendship during the latter part of his life, I feel myself bound to declare my firm conviction, I may say my certain knowledge, that he was a man who sincerely and deeply revered the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. In proof of this, I will take leave to read to you a passage from his own writings. It is from a sermon on "Resignation to the will of God, after the example of Jesus." Mr. Belsham says:—"There is no history which contains such powerful internal evidence of its truth, as the New Testament. I do not give the publicans and the fishermen of Galilee credit for genius to delineate a more perfect character than had ever existed in the world, if that character had not been exhibited before their eyes. In the conduct of Jesus as recorded by the Evangelists, there is *that consummate dignity, consistency, propriety, and excellence*, all that he saith and all that he doth is so perfectly agreeable to the extraordinary office which he assumes as the

prophet of God, the promised Messiah, the revealer of life—and *this without one single slip or failure*—that to have invented such a character, had it been fictitious, would have required an elevation of genius, and a comprehension of mind, far beyond what the adversaries of the Christian religion would be willing to allow to the plain Evangelical historians, or what the friends of revelation would desire to challenge on their behalf.” “The little incident” says Mr. Belsham, “from the narrative of which the text is extracted, (John xii, v. 27, 28,) is a beautiful illustration of these remarks. The Evangelist, by a concise, artless relation of simple facts, without any observation or comment of his own, has here exhibited our honored Master as a pattern of piety and devotion, *far beyond the ordinary limits of human attainment*; a devotion the most affecting and sublime, and at the same time at an infinite remove both from the ignorance and folly of a mean and blind superstition, and from the wild ravings and the odious familiarities of a gross and fanatical enthusiasm. It is an incident,” he continues, “which in the reflecting mind must excite the highest idea of our Lord’s character, and in the pious mind an earnest desire to resemble it; *while the truly humble spirit will not dare to hope that it shall ever equal the great original.*” Such were Mr. Belsham’s deliberate thoughts of the holiness and perfection of our Saviour’s character. I say again that I will not for a moment defend the vain passage in the “Calm Inquiry;” but I have shewn you that the writer did look with high and solemn admiration on the character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, it appears that my reverend opponent quoted a passage from the Sermons of Dr. Bruce, of Belfast, to shew that Unitarianism leads to irreverence for the authority of the Scriptures. Dr. Bruce is a most respectable and venerable man, who has been for many years a Professor in the Presbyterian College at Belfast. He is therefore no very distant neighbour of my reverend opponent, and as such might justly look for the most charitable treatment at his hands. He nevertheless represents Dr. Bruce as affirming, that “We are not to believe, as a necessary article of faith, any doctrine which is not repeated four times over by the four Evangelists, and that we are to consider every thing else in the word of God as not essential, and not to be observed.” Now if this report of my opponent’s observations which I have received be correct, I say that he has given a very partial and unfair account of Dr. Bruce’s expressions, as I will convince you by reading the whole passage. It is from a sermon “On the Interpretation of the Bible.” Dr. Bruce observes:—“It would be highly disrespectful to the Evangelists, to suppose that, while they recorded so many inferior incidents in the life of Christ, and so many subordinate points in his discourses, they omitted any material principle of gospel truth. To suppose, that they neglected any points essential to the salvation of

those churches and individuals for whom they composed their Gospels, would be an imputation which nothing in their characters can warrant." Is not this a reasonable view of the subject? It should be remembered that every one of the Evangelists wrote independently of all the others. The several Gospels were written at different times, in different places, and probably for the immediate use of different classes of people. Surely, then, it is not to be supposed that any one of the Evangelists would neglect to mention any essential point of doctrine. "Hence" continues Dr. Bruce, "we may deduce not only the sufficiency of Scripture in general, but also the sufficiency of every Evangelist separately, as to fundamentals,"—mark, *as to fundamentals*,—"for if any one of them were deficient in this respect, he would be exposed to all these imputations. From this another undeniable inference follows; that no principle which cannot be clearly proved from every one of the Evangelists can be an essential article of faith; for otherwise we must suppose that some one of them has omitted an essential truth." Observe what is said; that each of the four Gospels must be expected to contain every "essential truth," every "essential article of faith." I confess that I think this a reasonable principle; and I am willing, (if I may presume to say so,) to share with Dr. Bruce the responsibility of entertaining those views of the independent sufficiency of each of the Gospels in regard to essentials. At the same time, that Dr. Bruce does not think lightly of the instruction to be derived from every part of Scripture, will be evident to you from his own remarks at the close of this very sermon. "Let me then beseech you," he says in conclusion, "to meditate day by day, and night by night, upon that holy book, which contains the words of eternal life, all that pertains to life and godliness, having the promise both of the life that now is, and the life that is to come. Respectfully and gratefully receive that variety of religious knowledge, which is communicated in the Acts of the Apostles, and their Epistles; but fix upon the words of Jesus as the standard of your faith, the anchor of your hope, the guide and inspirer of your charity; and may God grant you a right understanding in all things.—Amen."

In the last place, my reverend opponent has had the generosity to take his hearers to the death-bed of Dr. Priestley, and to give a garbled account of the dying moments of that great and good man. He says, that shortly before Dr. Priestley expired, he laid his hand upon a book and said, "There is all my hope," or, "On that book I rest my hope." Now this book, says my opponent, was written by a fallible mortal, and was against the doctrine of future punishment. The tale is most incorrect and injurious. The book is *not* "against the doctrine of future punishment," but only against that tremendous doctrine of *eternal torments*, which some of the wisest and best men, in all ages, and of all churches, have denied to be any doctrine

of Christianity. It contains an argument against this doctrine drawn from the Scriptures themselves, from the revealed mercy of God. Neither did Dr. Priestley say any such thing, as that "all his hopes rested on that book." I will read to you what he did say; and at the same time will take the opportunity of stating some other particulars, connected with the death of this eminent professor of the Unitarian doctrine:—"On Saturday the 4th," observes the son and biographer of Dr. Priestley, "my father got up for about an hour while his bed was made. He said he felt more comfortable in bed than up. In the course of the day he expressed his gratitude in being permitted to die quietly in his family, without pain, with every convenience and comfort he could wish for. He dwelt upon the peculiarly happy situation in which it had pleased the Divine Being to place him in life, and the great advantage he had enjoyed in the acquaintance and friendship of some of the best and wisest men in the age in which he lived, and the satisfaction he derived from having led an useful as well as a happy life." There are no signs here, I think, of the heart-withering influences which my opponent ascribes to the Unitarian faith. There is here no very convincing proof that the Unitarian doctrine can afford its professors "no peace of mind in the present life." "On Sunday," continues the Memoir, "he was much weaker, and only sat up in an armed chair, while his bed was made. He desired me to read to him the eleventh chapter of John. I was going on to read to the end of the chapter, but he stopped me at the 45th verse. He dwelt for some time on the advantage he had derived from reading the Scriptures daily, and advised me to do the same; saying, that it would prove to me as it had done to him, a source of the purest pleasure." This does not seem to shew very clearly that Unitarianism leads, as my opponent alleges, to irreverence for the word of God. You see what had been the custom of Dr. Priestley's life, and what was his advice to his family, in regard to the habitual perusal of the Scriptures. I will now read to you what Dr. Priestley said respecting the book, to which my opponent has alluded. "He desired me" says his son, "to reach him a pamphlet which was at his bed's head," "Simpson on the duration of future punishment." "It will be a source of satisfaction to you to read that pamphlet," said he, giving it to me, "It contains *my sentiments*, and a belief in *them* will be a relief to you in the most trying circumstances, as it has been to me." Now you perceive, my friends, that Dr. Priestley did not say, as my opponent has told you, that all his hopes rested on this book, considered as the production of a fallible mortal. He says, indeed, nothing at all about his hopes. He simply recommends a religious book to his son's perusal, observing that "it contained his sentiments,"—which, considering the nature of the book, must mean that it contained an exposition of his views of the paternal goodness and government of God, as revealed in the gospel,—and declaring that these

religious views had been a support to him in the most trying circumstances of his life. I ask you now, if you ever heard of a more ill-natured perversion of a man's dying words, than has been exhibited in this instance by my reverend opponent. Imagine that any one of you, my brethren, should in your last moments recommend some favourite religious book to the attention of your weeping children, as containing sentiments, drawn from an exposition of Christian doctrine, which would support them amidst the trials of the world, as they had supported you. What would be your feelings, if you should afterwards look down from your place in the mansions of bliss, and behold some sectarian-minded caviller perverting this pious act into an evidence of your scorn for God and for religion? But ah! our hearts will doubtless then be wholly purified, and we shall be enabled to look even on such a wretched display of bigotry with feelings of unmingled compassion. Suffer me now to read to you a few more sentences from the "Memoirs of Dr. Priestley."—"Upon Mr. — coming into his room he said "You see Sir I am living." Mr. — observed he would always live. "Yes" said he "I believe I shall; and we shall all meet again in another and a better world." He said this with great animation, laying hold on Mr. —'s hand in both his. "At prayers he had all the children brought to his bedside as before. He congratulated us on the dispositions of our children; said it was a satisfaction to see them likely to turn out well; and continued for some time to express his confidence in a happy immortality, and in a future state which would afford us an ample field for the exertion of our faculties." There is no very convincing proof here, that the Unitarian faith, as my opponent declares, can afford no prospect of happiness in a future world. "On Monday morning the 6th of February, after having lain perfectly still till four o'clock in the morning, he called to me, but in a fainter tone than usual, to give him some wine and tincture of bark. I asked him how he felt. He answered he had no pain, but appeared fainting away gradually. In about half an hour he desired in a faint voice that we would move him from the bed on which he lay to a cot, that he might lie with his lower limbs horizontal and his head upright. He died in about ten minutes after we had moved him, but breathed his last so easy that neither myself or my wife, who were both sitting close to him, perceived it at the time. He had put his hand to his face which prevented our observing it." Such was the close of Dr. Priestley's earthly career. My reverend opponent may not think it an unworthy employment of his time, to travel through the land casting false aspersions upon the faith and character of such a man. I would rather say, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace!"

I shall now proceed at once to the more general topics, with which I design to occupy your attention in this concluding

Lecture. My reverend opponent, in his last discourse, expatiated at great length on what he has chosen to denominate the pernicious moral influences, the evil and withering tendencies, of the Unitarian system.

The first topic of this kind relates to a proper reverence for the Holy Scriptures. You have been told that our doctrine leads to irreverence for the word of God. By "the word of God," in this accusation, is meant the written Scriptures, the Bible itself, considered as a book. This is entirely an orthodox perversion. You have no authority from the Bible itself, to denominate the written letter of the Scripture "the word of God." This title belongs properly to the important *contents* of the Scriptures, to the divine *doctrines* and *precepts* which they contain,—and of these doctrines and precepts every individual believer, in Protestant Churches at least, has a right to judge for himself. However, there can be no doubt that a proper reverence for the written Scriptures, is a Christian habit of mind. Since we believe the Christian religion to be true and divine, the Bible is the most precious book in the world. It is the faithful record of what God has done, by especial acts of providence, for the salvation and happiness of his sinful creatures on earth. It is therefore entitled to great reverence. In this feeling I most cordially participate, and, both as a Christian and a Christian Minister, hold myself bound to give it all just encouragement in the minds of others. As a Unitarian Christian, I cannot but think that I have peculiar cause to value and reverence the Scriptures. They are to me the only authorised depository of true religion. They serve me for Creed, Catechism, and Articles. I subscribe to them, and them alone, as my confession of faith. I look upon the Scriptures, in short, with undivided reverence, as alone containing the pure word of life revealed from Heaven. And these, to the best of my knowledge, are the sentiments of all sincere Unitarians towards the Holy Scriptures. To what causes then can it be owing, that we should be thought deficient in reverence for these sacred writings? I apprehend it is chiefly owing to this simple cause, that we differ from certain Christians in regard to the proper method of *showing* our reverence for the Scriptures. We think that others often treat these books in a manner which is directly calculated to sap the foundations of the authority which really belongs to them, by setting up false and extravagant pretensions concerning them, by appealing to the superstitious credulity of men, more than to their reason or judgment, in behalf of the Holy Scriptures. We therefore choose to manifest our reverence for the Bible in other ways. We are not in the habit of assuming, because we are not aware of the slightest authority for assuming, that every word within the covers of the Bible was written by men whose minds were, in various degrees, under the influence of divine inspiration. We are not in the habit of assuming as a matter not to be inquired into, that every portion of what are

now called the Old and New Testaments, was written by some inspired servant of God ; that the original text of these books has descended to our time in a state of perfect accuracy ; that the common English translation of every passage is undoubtedly correct ; and that the vulgar interpretation of every sentence of Scripture is undeniably right. We search into these matters, and endeavour to settle our judgment, in every instance, by careful inquiry and sound knowledge. Are we justified in this method of proceeding ? or are *they* to be commended, who, like my reverend opponent in this controversy, appeal to the blind superstitions of men, by telling them that what is now denominated the Bible “is one compact production, which has the Holy Spirit of God for its author ?” This question can only be answered by considering rather more at large, on general principles, what are the *proper methods* of displaying our reverence for the Scriptures.

First, then, it must surely be proper to inquire diligently into the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of the several books of Scripture, so as to form an enlightened judgment of their respective claims to our reverence. It seems a strange mode of shewing respect for these writings, blindly to take up with all that Lappens to be presented to us, and without a particle of knowledge, without a moment's thought or discrimination, to say,—“This I will reverence as the inspired word of God, every book, every chapter, every verse, every word of it alike.” I say, this appears to be a strange way of shewing reverence for the Scriptures. It amounts, you perceive, to a perfect heedlessness whether that which we receive and revere as the word of God be truth or imposition. Every well informed Christian knows the true state of the case to be this,—that there is abundant evidence for the authenticity of almost all the writings which now comprise the volume of the New Testament. But he knows at the same time that there is room for discrimination, between the respective claims of the different books. It is absurd to place the same reliance, for truth of doctrine, on a certain phrase in the Second Epistle of Peter, as on the words of Jesus recorded in the undoubtedly authentic Gospel of Matthew.

In the second place, it must be a proper way of shewing reverence for the Scriptures, to use all diligence that we may possess them in the most correct state, both as to the original text, and as to the translation. It seems, again, a strange way of manifesting respect for these writings, to cherish a blind confidence in the integrity and infallibility of all through whose hands they may have passed in descending to us. It is of no consequence, in this point of view, what opinion we entertain concerning the inspiration of the original Scriptures. We know that we do not possess the original Scriptures. And surely all the transcribers, who in past ages copied these writings from one manuscript to another, and all the translators who have

been engaged in rendering them into our native language, were not inspired, like the Evangelists or Apostles. It is very possible, therefore, that some errors may have crept into these books, as is universally known to be the case with other writings of equal antiquity. It is proved, indeed, to a demonstration, that we do possess the original Scriptures in a state of astonishing accuracy, considering all the circumstances. It is equally well known, however, that these Books have not come down to us free from all errors; and that a vast deal has been happily accomplished by learned men, within the last sixty or eighty years, towards correcting these errors, by consulting all the most ancient copies and versions of the Scriptures. It is just as certain, therefore, that some passages in our present editions of the New Testament are spurious, or corrupt, and ought to be amended, as it is that those editions are in the main correct. So likewise in regard to the translation of the Scriptures. The common English version is in the main a faithful and beautiful translation. But no man, who understands what he affirms, will pretend that it is a perfect, a faultless translation; and since there are means of correcting it, why should not a free use be made of these means, in the settlement of controverted points of doctrine?

In the third place, it must be right, when we are satisfied that we have attained the best text, and the best version of the Scriptures, to use our utmost endeavours to *interpret* them correctly. Surely it is not the mere words, but the true sense of the Scriptures, that we all profess to reverence. Our best endeavours therefore should be employed, to ascertain this sense, by availing ourselves of all the light and assistance of every kind that can be procured.

These, it appears to me, my brethren, are the proper methods of shewing our reverence for the Scriptures. If there be any sect of Christians who make a more consistent use of this kind of knowledge than others, methinks they are the very last people who should be charged with any want of due reverence for the sacred writings. I say, *if* there be any such sect; but I do not assume that there is; for I know that this proper treatment of the Scriptures is not confined to any one party of Christians. It is confined to the intelligent, sober-minded, and enlightened of all parties, in opposition to the ways of mere popular declaimers, and of those arrogant men who, whilst they freely criticize the Scriptures themselves, would presumptuously deny this liberty to others. We, as Unitarians, stand upon no different footing in this respect from other Christians. The whole Unitarian controversy is nothing more than a discussion concerning the *right meaning* of the Scriptures. We value and revere the Scriptures as heartily as our brethren. We only wish to abide by what we consider to be the true *sense* of the Scriptures. But prejudices are raised against our interpretations. It is said that we explain away the

true meaning; that we cast a gloss over the obvious sense; that we twist, and torture, and do all manner of violence to the language of Scripture, till we get rid of all that we disapprove. It is easy to give such contemptuous names to the reasoning of a theological opponent; much easier, oftentimes, than to confute his reasoning. But if all men had yet learnt to use their own judgments in religion, as freely as they do on most other subjects, they would soon perceive that this again is one of the arts of controversy.

I must be allowed to explain, that I consider it the best of all ways of shewing our reverence for the Scriptures, to read them seriously and habitually, with a view to the *practical* improvement of our hearts and lives. It was for this purpose more than any other that they were written; it is this end more than any other which they are adapted to promote. And here permit me to observe, that in regard to this highest and best use of the Scriptures, I have no objection to offer to any sober and reasonable views of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit. I am not a reckless denier of all intercourse between the Father of spirits and the hearts of his pious creatures. I have no objection whatever to offer, therefore, against any humble and rational views of the necessity of such aid from above, in the *moral purification of the heart and life*, through the instrumental use of the Scriptures. But when I see a discomfited polemic, struggling in vain against the arguments of his adversary, the moment he feels himself at a loss, assuming to be under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit in regard to the meaning of a particular passage of Scripture,—I know what to think of all such pretensions, and of those who make them.

The second general charge which my opponent brings against the Unitarian doctrine is, that it leads to Scepticism. I have already noticed the remarkable proof of this which he has drawn from my own conduct; and I shall now dispose of the general topic very briefly. Scepticism, you know, is a very vague and sweeping charge. It may mean little or much, any thing or nothing. We are all Sceptics to a certain extent,—in regard to principles and opinions which other men believe most profoundly. Every Protestant is a Sceptic, in the eyes of a devout Catholic. I might plausibly represent my opponent as a very sceptical man, for he appears to me to doubt most unreasonably of things which to my mind are as plain in the Scriptures as the sun in the heavens. He doubts whether Christ, being a creature, could be empowered and qualified by the Almighty God for the discharge of his solemn functions, as Saviour and Judge of the world,—which seems to me a very sceptical state of mind. But I shall bestow on him no such denomination. We are all Sceptics, I say, to a certain extent; and we are right in being sceptical concerning matters on which we can discern no solid reasons for believing. The only important question is, whether Unitarianism leads to unreasonable and groundless

scepticism. How will it be proved that our views have any such tendency? We certainly do hesitate to believe that Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead, is God himself; and we hesitate to receive many other dogmas of the popular theology. But you cannot convert this into any proof of blameable Scepticism, without first assuming that these doctrines are clearly revealed, and undeniably true; the direct contrary of which is plain to our judgments.

Does my reverend opponent mean, that Unitarian views have any especial tendency to produce Scepticism in regard to the general truth of divine revelation? This, you know, is what is commonly understood by the term: a Sceptic is an unbeliever in divine revelation. If this be the meaning of my opponent, I protest against it, as alike absurd in reason, and false in fact. I say that, speaking of them as a body, no people entertain a more firm and settled conviction of the truth of divine revelation, than Unitarian Christians. No people have done their part more cheerfully, or more effectively, in maintaining the cause of revelation against the assaults of unbelievers. It is my strong persuasion, that Dr. Priestley, whom my opponent with a monstrous absurdity would class with Sceptics, did more to stem the torrent of unbelief in this country, at a very critical period, than any other individual. By the influence of his reputation as a philosopher, by his rational views of the doctrines of the gospel, by his many powerful writings on the evidences of Christianity, by his open and manly profession of his own faith amongst scientific men, both in this country and in France, he did immense service to the cause of revelation, when a wild and desperate infidelity, even to the awful extent of Atheism, was making very rapid strides in the world. I say again, that no man is better entitled to the gratitude of the Christian world, for his defence of the credibility of the gospel, than Dr. Lardner. I say again, that in more recent times, when the Taylors and Carliles, and other such writers, have openly assailed the truth of Christianity, the ablest defences of revelation have been produced, not by the Clergy of the Church of England, but by Unitarian Ministers. We are so far from being rendered sceptical by our views, that we believe in the divine origin of Christianity the more confidently, and we are prepared to defend it in this enlightened age the more boldly, because we are convinced that it contains no doctrines at variance with the dictates of reason.

But my reverend opponent, I observe, regards it as some evidence of our Scepticism, that we admit the innocency of involuntary errors of faith; that we believe the good and pious of all creeds may hope to be saved. He says that this is preaching another gospel. Such may be his opinion; but we claim the right to interpret the gospel for ourselves; and we think this is the true doctrine of the Christian religion, true evangelical hope and piety. For myself, I am free to confess, that

I look on this as one of the most glorious principles of revealed truth. So far from being ashamed of this peculiarity of my faith, (if indeed it be a peculiarity of Unitarians, which I am happy in acknowledging that it is not), I can earnestly assure my opponent that I prize and cherish this conviction beyond all which I can possibly express. I would not be robbed of it for any consideration; not for the most accurate faith, not for the most perfect knowledge, on every controverted point of doctrine in the world. I do not think lightly of the value of correct views of religious truth, and of Christian truth in particular. I think them exceedingly important. But I know that all men are fallible in their judgment on these matters. I know there are a thousand sources of error presented to every one, by circumstances which he cannot govern. I believe that God, in his infinite wisdom, has been pleased to make the foundations of true piety and virtue, in a great measure, independent of peculiar points of doctrine. I believe also in the infinite justice and mercy of our common Father in Heaven; and therefore I am persuaded that He will never condemn any of his creatures to the eternal loss of his favour, on account of involuntary errors of faith. If this be Scepticism, it is to me far better than most men's implicit belief in their party creeds. If this be Scepticism, I trust that I may live and die a happy Sceptic.

The next general charge which my opponent has brought against the Unitarian doctrine, is, that it is a system of *negatives*. He says that we believe little or nothing; that our system is almost entirely made up of mere negatives. What absurdities will not some men assert, when their judgments are blinded by the mists of theological prejudice! We believe most positively, that there is one God of infinite perfection, who made and rules the Universe; we believe positively, that His providence, and His tender mercies, are over all his works, so that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice; we believe positively, that He is to be worshipped and obeyed by all his rational creatures, the children of men, over whom he is conducting a righteous moral government, which shall extend beyond this life and this world, even to an eternal state of retribution; we believe positively, that He has at sundry times, and in divers manners, in addition to the ordinary course of his providence, interposed by wonders and signs and miracles, to promote the moral and spiritual salvation of men, the true record of which divine interposition we have in the Holy Scriptures; we believe positively, that Jesus Christ was the chosen Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour ordained from the foundation of the world, who appeared in the fulness of time to put away sin, by his holy teaching, life and works, and benevolent sacrifice of himself on the cross; we believe positively, that God raised him from the dead on the third day, and hath now exalted him to power and glory at his own right hand, for the finishing of

the great work of universal human redemption; we believe positively, that he will in like manner raise all mankind from the dead, and bestow eternal life and happiness on all who shall then be found meet objects of the mercy of Heaven; we believe positively, that the precepts and example of Jesus Christ embody the principles of a perfect righteousness, a perfect morality and piety, the practice of which is the only sure foundation of personal and social happiness in this world, the only right preparation for immortal felicity hereafter. All this we believe most positively; and yet because we reject certain dogmas enshrined in antiquated creeds, we are represented by my opponent as having a mere system of *negatives*. I say again, what absurdities will not some men assert, when blinded by theological prejudices!

But in taking some further notice of this subject, I would observe that, granting our system to be remarkable for negations, as compared with other theological systems, the question whether this be a merit or demerit of Unitarian Christianity, depends entirely on the previous question, whether the things which we deny be *true* or *false*. If they be true, undoubtedly it is a great fault in our system to reject them; if on the contrary they be false, our rejection of them is a merit, and a commendation of the system which we embrace. There is no weight, therefore, in this mode of attack on Unitarianism, unless you proceed on the most unwarrantable assumptions. You give as an example of the negative character of our system, for instance, that we deny the proper deity of Christ. We certainly do; but that is because we believe that no such doctrine is taught in the Scriptures; and you cannot fairly make this a reproach against us, without assuming that the doctrine certainly *is* taught in the Scriptures, which is the very subject of the controversy in which we are engaged. To my mind, there is something excessively childish in these assumptions, which mark the entire course of my reverend opponent's argument.

Again, you allege that we deny the Holy Ghost. It is not so;—unless you once more assume the truth of your opinions concerning the Holy Spirit, that it is a third distinct person of the Godhead. We believe in the Holy Spirit as much as we believe in God himself, according to *our* view of the true teaching of the Scriptures respecting the Holy Spirit. Would you have us believe according to *your* views, which we think to be unscriptural, and false? By this absurd method of argument, it would be just as reasonable in us to reproach you for holding a system of *positives*;—namely positive errors, positive corruptions of the pure Christian faith. Again, you allege that we deny the existence of the Devil:—that is another of our negatives. Now, I beg to remind you, my friends, that there is no proper connection between the Unitarian doctrine concerning the person of Christ, and all denial of the existence

of any such being as the Devil. There is no reason why any man should not entertain both opinions, if he believes they are both sanctioned by the Scriptures. But I have no wish to conceal the fact, that most Unitarians do deny, if not the existence of the Devil, at all events the attributes and works popularly ascribed to this evil spirit. I have no fears that this will much longer be considered a reproach to our doctrine, in the minds of rational and thoughtful people. I would sooner claim it as a recommendation; for I do believe that there is no more groundless, no more hurtful superstition prevailing, than this notion of the existence of an omnipotent, or almost omnipotent, malignant spirit, secretly ruling the hearts of God's creatures, and thwarting his merciful purposes for their salvation. I am quite willing to admit that this negation belongs to our system.

My opponent further states, that we deny the *atonement*; that is another of our culpable negations. I have already contended, and I will ever contend, that we do not deny the atonement. The true, Scriptural doctrine of atonement, we believe and rejoice in. My opponent is pleased to say, indeed, that the reason why I do not expressly deny the doctrine, is because I find the word in the Scriptures. Now, it is a well known fact, that the word "*atonement*" occurs but once in the whole New Testament; and that it is there a translation of the very same word which is rendered elsewhere "*reconciliation*." Surely therefore, if this were my only obstacle in the way of rejecting the doctrine, I should have no great difficulty in surmounting it, by contending that the word ought to be altogether expunged from the Christian Scriptures. One who can twist and torture the Scriptures, as my opponent says I can, would hardly be checked in his course, methinks, by such a trifling impediment as this. Moreover, if I were so inclined, I could easily produce respectable authority for my opinion, even that of a living Bishop of the Church of England. I allude to Dr. Maltby, the present Bishop of Chichester, than whom a more usefully learned or enlightened divine, perhaps never adorned the Episcopal Bench of this country. I will read to you his observations on this subject. I am aware that my reverend opponent does not wish it to be known, how often the authority of the ablest men in his own Church is against him, on these points of Scriptural criticism and interpretation; nevertheless, I do wish it to be known, and therefore I shall read the passage. You see, my brethren, that I am fond of quoting the writings of Bishops. I have quoted several already, and may do so again. I am humbly of opinion, that no body of men have rendered greater services to the cause of sound theology, and true Christian knowledge, than the Bishops of the Church of England. My reverend opponent "throws them overboard," without ceremony. I read and admire their writings, and endeavour to profit by their instructions. Such is the different

treatment which Bishops meet with, from an Episcopalian Clergyman on the one hand, and from a Dissenting Unitarian Minister on the other. "Dr. John Taylor," says the Bishop, "cannot imagine what should induce our translators to render *καταλλαγὴν* by *atonement*, when they render the verb *καταλλάσσω* by *reconcile* in the foregoing verse, and in all other places; namely, 1st Cor. vii. v. 11; 2nd Cor. v. vs. 18, 19, and 20;—and *καταλλαγὴν* in all other places by *reconciliation*, Romans, ch. xi. v. 15; 2nd Cor. ch. v. vs. 18 and 19."—"Archbishop Newcome has adopted the word "reconciliation" in his version; and Dr. Hey acknowledges that it is preferable. He too professes himself "at a loss to see what could lead our translators to the word 'atonement' in this place, as '*reconciling*' had repeatedly occurred in the preceding verse.—(Lectures on Divinity, vol. 3, p. 298.) "It would undoubtedly have been better," continues the Bishop of Chichester, "if in translating the same word, when it meant the same thing, the same English term had been invariably used in our version; but in justice to the translators, it should be remarked that the words *atone* and *atonement*, according to the then usage of our language, did express the notions now conveyed by *reconcile*, and *reconciliation*." You thus perceive, my brethren, that if I wished to get rid of the word "*atonement*" from the New Testament, I should be able to bring very respectable authority to my support. But I have no such desire. Knowing as I do, that *atonement* means *reconciliation*, and believing as I do, that the great purpose for which Christ came into the world, was to reconcile sinners unto God, I am a firm believer in the true Scriptural doctrine of "Atonement by Jesus Christ." I claim for myself, and my fellow Unitarians, the reputation, the merit, if it be a merit, of giving a most earnest and cordial reception to this great doctrine of the Scriptures. But let no man seek to impose on me his own particular views of the *nature* and *method* of this atonement, as of the same authority with the positive declarations of Holy Writ. To this I cannot succumb;—against such dogmatism I must rebel. I acknowledge that the difference between our views, and the views which commonly prevail on this subject, is very considerable, and very serious. Still, it is a difference of interpretation only, not of acknowledgment on the one side and denial on the other. The question is not whether there be such a doctrine in the Scriptures. I, at least, am willing to acknowledge that there is. The only question between us relates to what the Scriptures teach concerning this atonement; and Christians of other persuasions have clearly no more right to charge us with denying the doctrine, because our views of it differ from theirs, than we have to retort the charge upon them, because their views of it differ from ours. It will be wiser to abstain from all such vain and uncharitable accusations on both sides.

The next general charge which my reverend opponent brings against the Unitarian faith, is, that it leads men to "dishonour the Saviour." Now this again, as he represents it, is entirely an assumption of the truth of his own opinions, and the falsity of ours. We do endeavour to honour Jesus Christ as we believe he claims to be honoured, as we think we are commanded to honour him in the Scriptures. The particular question, whether we render to Christ the honours which are his due, is involved in the more general question, whether the Trinitarian or Unitarian belief, concerning the person of Christ, be the true doctrine of the New Testament. We honour Christ as the Messiah of God, the true Christ, chosen and ordained before the foundation of the world, to appear as the Saviour of mankind from sin and death. We honour him on the ground of his divine mission and authority; on the ground of his mighty miracles, which were his credentials from the Almighty Father; on the ground of his own perfect holiness and beneficence of character; on the ground of his sufferings and death, voluntarily endured in obedience to the will of God, to complete the gracious plan of human redemption. And the *way* in which we honour him, is by reverently and cheerfully receiving whatever he has taught us, concerning the attributes, the will, and purposes of his heavenly Father, concerning the obedience which God requires of us, and the terms on which we may hope for the forgiveness of sins; by observing his institutions, in particular, by commemorating his death in the holy ordinance which he appointed, as we have done this day in this place; and finally, by striving to keep his moral commandments. We rely on Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour; not indeed as a vicarious substitute, who has done and endured every thing in our stead; but as one who, by the divinity of his office, the authority of his teaching, the perfection of his example, the power and extent of his spiritual dominion, is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him through faith. In all these respects we honour the Saviour. It is often said, indeed, that if we honour him at all, it must be as *a mere man*. If it be meant, that we honour him only as we might honour any other wise and good man, it is wholly without truth. We honour Christ as we honour no other man, and no other being under God. We honour him as one in whom the Spirit of the Most High dwelt without measure; we honour him, not only as the self-sacrificing man of Nazareth, who bled and died for our salvation, but as the best beloved Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his all-glorious perfections.

The next general charge which my opponent brings against the Unitarian doctrine, is indeed a very strange one. He says that it "destroys the infinite character of the Father's love." This, my Christian friends, I acknowledge to be a very serious and awful charge. How is it to be substantiated? How does

the Unitarian doctrine lead to this impiety? Because, says my opponent, it represents God as "surrendering up only a finite creature" for the salvation of the world. Now, my brethren, do let me entreat you to look at this objection closely. Be not imposed upon by words. Who but a creature, could ever have been delivered up to suffering and death for the salvation of men? Or, if I must entangle myself in orthodox subtleties, how could Christ be thus surrendered up *considered otherwise than as a creature*? Do you mean really and seriously to acknowledge it to be an article of the Trinitarian faith, that our Saviour, *considered as God, in respect to his divine nature*, was crucified and slain by wicked hands? Will you make yourselves responsible for the introduction of such a notion into the fundamentals of the Christian Religion? I give you fair warning, that if you do mean this, you are embracing a notion, from which the wise and pious of your own general creed have declared that they shrink with unfeigned horror.

The plain fact is, that the accusation of my opponent against our doctrine, is in this case grounded on a self-evident fallacy; inasmuch as it is admitted by Trinitarians themselves, that, *considered as God*, as far as relates to his *divine nature*, Christ neither was nor could be surrendered up to any kind of humiliation or suffering. Remember, my brethren, that I am not calling in question the Scriptural doctrine, or rather the Scriptural sentiments, on this very interesting subject. I know it is written in the Scriptures, that "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that the world through him might be saved." I know that the infinite compassion of God towards men is set forth in the Scriptures, by declaring that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." I am so far from denying this, that I am sensible of the greatest truth and beauty in these illustrations of the tender mercy of God. But I maintain, that their truth and beauty depend entirely on our regarding Christ in the Unitarian point of view, as a creature, *capable* of enduring unmerited pains and injuries for the benefit of mankind. To my mind, these declarations of Scripture become either gross absurdities, or empty vanities, the moment Christ is regarded as God, incapable of being really delivered up to suffering and death. You must perceive, that this illustration of the divine goodness is drawn, as indeed every such illustration must be, from analogy with human connections, and human feelings. It would be a painful sacrifice, and therefore a strong testimony of love, in any human parent, to expose his favourite, his most obedient and best beloved child, to great dangers and sufferings, for the benefit of all his other children. Therefore, the exceeding great kindness of God towards us sinful men, is beautifully illustrated in the Scriptures, by saying that God delivered up Jesus Christ, his most holy and best beloved Son, to suffer scorn and injury, and finally to be sacrificed on the cross, for our salvation. But

again, I would press it upon your attention, that the truth of this affecting illustration of the love of God, entirely depends on our regarding Christ as a creature, capable of suffering and death. It wholly vanishes, the moment we consider Christ as an impassible and immutable being.

This illustration of the mercy of God, even as it stands in the Scripture, is necessarily imperfect, as must be the case with every illustration of infinite goodness to the minds of finite creatures. But as it is handled by my reverend opponent, it becomes positively absurd. His argument, in this instance, appears to rest entirely on the supposition, that we are to estimate the extent of God's loving kindness, not so much by the *value* of the gifts we receive, as from the *sacrifice* which He has made in bestowing them. It would appear, I say, from the strain of my reverend opponent's observations, that we are to measure the extent of God's compassion, not so much by the value of his blessings to ourselves, as by what it must have cost him to surrender them up. What an absurd principle is this, by which to appreciate the ways and gifts of God ! He makes no sacrifice, it costs him nothing, when he freely giveth us all things, even his best beloved Son. To argue in this way, is to pervert a mere illustration employed by the sacred writers, into an abstract metaphysical principle, which is wholly inapplicable to the divine nature. I believe, indeed, and every Unitarian believes, as devoutly as my reverend opponent, in "the infinite character of the Father's love." But I trust that we build our faith in this most precious truth, on some more solid grounds than such a mere theological quidity. I read in the Scriptures, as I learn from the employment of my reason on the works of nature, that God is a most merciful Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, to all creatures, giving to all life and breath and all things. I read in the Scriptures, moreover, that God is always exercising a special and paternal providence over mankind. I learn even more than this ; for I am taught that even the aggravated sinfulness of men does not shut up the tender mercies of God against them ; that he is graciously ready to pardon every penitent soul, and now, through Jesus Christ, has proclaimed the forgiveness of sins, and the rewards of everlasting life, to all who sincerely cast themselves upon his compassion. On these simple grounds, I believe in the infinite character of the Father's love. What right or reason have I, to suppose any limits to the goodness which hath wrought such wonders as these ? I find that God is revealed to me in the Scriptures, under the adorable name and character of my heavenly *Father*. I feel that this includes all that I could desire to know, or to believe, concerning the nature and extent of his *love* towards me. I behold in the ways and words of Christ, the clearest evidence that he was full of tenderest care and compassion for men. I am assured that he was the image of God, and did always whatsoever pleased the Father.

In the character of Christ, therefore, I behold a glorious moral illustration of the character of God. On these simple and Scriptural grounds, again, I believe in the infinitude of the Almighty Father's love. And neither my reverend opponent, nor any mortal, shall shake my confidence in this heart-cheering truth, by any idle talk in which he may think proper to indulge concerning the withering influences of my religious faith.

In the last place, my reverend opponent lays an accusation against the Unitarian doctrine, that it is a *cold* and *chilling* system; that it is entirely unsuited to the poor and unsophisticated part of mankind; in short, that it can afford no peace in this life, and no prospect of happiness hereafter. To every separate count of this long indictment, I plead, in behalf of my Unitarian faith, NOT GUILTY. It is no cold and chilling system, to those who receive it seriously. And what is the value of the Trinitarian faith, to those who do *not* receive it seriously? But I say again, that to those who embrace it earnestly, the Unitarian faith is no cheerless and chilling system, but is full of heavenly light and comfort for every believing soul. This charge against our doctrine, indeed, is calculated to be a very popular one. Most men *feel*, much more than they *think*, on the subject of religion. When therefore they are told, that a system of religion has no consoling, invigorating influences on the heart, they are immediately apt to conclude that the essence, the very spirit of true religion, must be absent from this system. In fact, they are perfectly right in their feeling, but wrong in their belief, respecting the proper tendency of Unitarian views of the gospel. The experience, and the solemn testimony of thousands, is my authority for declaring that they *are* wrong. Neither, in truth, is there the slightest degree of reasonableness in this prejudice of Trinitarians. Why should it be thought, that all the genial warmth and consolation of religion, must arise from the belief that there are three persons in one God; or that God forgives the sins of men only on account of the infinite satisfaction which has been made to his justice by the death of his Son; or that countless myriads of human beings will finally be delivered over to everlasting torments? Why should not our faith in the simple unity, the free grace, the impartial love, the universal, unchangeable, triumphant mercy of God, be to the full as cheering and consolatory to the hearts of all that believe, as the melancholly system of reputed orthodoxy? It is a most absurd and groundless fancy.

But my reverend opponent likewise alleges that the Unitarian doctrine is wholly unsuited to the simple and unsophisticated minds of the *poor*. "How many of the poor," he exclaims, "embrace this doctrine?" I answer,—Thousands, very many thousands of the poor have embraced, and do still embrace this doctrine; and let me tell my reverend opponent, that thousands more would embrace it, if he, and such as he, did not constantly impose on the credulity of the simple-minded

poor, by giving false representations of the Unitarian doctrine ; if he, and such as he, did not employ all their influence, personal and clerical, to fright the poor from attending to a doctrine which they are told is a damnable heresy. I could tell you many authentic stories, my brethren, (and some of no very distant date), which would go far to account for the fact, that the poor do not more readily and openly profess the Unitarian doctrines. But I say, that the fact itself is by no means so general, as my opponent would represent. I, at least, have always found the poor, the serious, honest, thoughtful poor, amongst the very best of Unitarians, the most consistent in their profession, and evidently deriving the greatest benefit from the cheering influences of their faith. I say this without meaning any disparagement to the rich, who when they abide firmly by this unpopular doctrine, notwithstanding the unpleasantness to which it often exposes them in the world, are entitled to much commendation. But I repeat it, that I have generally found the virtuous and pious poor, best prepared to enjoy the good influences of a simple faith in the unity and paternity of God. How can it be otherwise? What does a poor man require of his religion? What kind of a religion is it which he in particular needs, to meet his peculiar condition? I take it that a poor man's religion should be a *plain* religion, one which, in all its great essential articles, lies within the grasp of his own plain understanding; which does not require to be nicely explained to him by his priest, lest he should believe, that three eternal are two more than one eternal, and thereupon "without doubt perish everlastingly." I say that a poor man's best religion must be emphatically a plain, simple, reasonable religion; otherwise it cannot, in truth, be *his* religion; it cannot be the sincere, rational belief of his own mind; it is merely the religion of another man, in the truth of which he is taught that he must implicitly confide. Can it then be pretended for a moment, that there is in this respect any comparison to be made between the Athanasian creed and the Scriptures? "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Impossible! the latter is the only suitable faith for the poor; as they will be brought to understand, in God's own time and manner. Again, I maintain that a poor man's religion should be one which most clearly, most largely, and most consistently reveals to his mind the infinite, paternal compassion of God, as the impartial Father of all mankind. The poor man needs to be cheered and consoled, under the many privations and difficulties to which his earthly lot exposes him. I contend that he will find this consolation, abundantly, in Unitarian views of the providence, government, and final purposes of God, as revealed in the gospel. Our faith is incumbered with no subtleties on this subject, any more than on the subject of the *nature* of God. We see nothing in the Scriptures about the infinite difficulty of reconciling the

mercy with the justice of God. We find him uniformly represented there, as the Father of mercies, ever ready to exercise compassion towards all who seek it. We believe that his redeeming love is co-extensive with his creating and preserving goodness. Under the influence of such a faith, the poor man can look up to Heaven, through all the clouds and mists of earth, and drink in hope, and consolation, and joy, from the beams of his Father's countenance.

But I might appeal to facts on this point. I might confute my reverend opponent's insinuations by facts. If time permitted, or circumstances demanded it, I could easily give you some authentic instances of the profession of Unitarianism by the poor, which I doubt not would greatly surprise some of you. I can tell my reverend opponent, that if he had extended his polemical pilgrimage a little farther to the West, he would have found, not fifty miles from this place, in the town of Devonport, a Unitarian Congregation to the number of more than three hundred, consisting entirely of the poorer classes of society,—consisting, I believe without a single exception, of men who earn their daily bread by their daily toil;—who without any assistance from others, by serious inquiry and the study of the Scriptures, have wrought their own way out of the darkness and perplexity of the orthodox creed, to a firm persuasion of the Unitarian faith;—who with their own hands have raised their own place of worship, and with their own hearts and tongues have carried on the public worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the dictates of their consciences, many wishing but none being able to make them afraid;—who for many years, in the midst of unexampled difficulties and obstacles, have stood firm in the profession of the Unitarian doctrine,—and in the course of these years, have experienced at least all the ordinary calamities of human life, have witnessed distress and affliction in all its shifting forms, have seen their parents, husbands, wives and children, become the victims of disease and death, and resign their spirits into the hands of God, under the influence of a pure Unitarian faith. Now I propose to my reverend opponent, if he really desires to know the truth, that instead of travelling about from city to city, dealing out his uncharitable tales against us and our doctrine, he should pay a friendly visit to this Unitarian congregation; and if amongst these three hundred poor, he should find one who does not willingly testify, with heart and soul, to the cheering and consolatory influence of our simple faith, I am willing that my reverend opponent shall have all the benefit of this *fact* in his next controversial discourses.

My opponent finally declares, that the Unitarian doctrine can give no peace of mind in this world, nor any sure hope of happiness hereafter. How does he know this? Has he ever been a Unitarian? Has he ever had to struggle through all the natural trials, sorrows, and calamities of life, with the bigoted

slanders of his fellow Christians to boot, having this simple faith alone to sustain him? Never. How, then, does he venture so confidently to pronounce judgment against a faith, which he has never experienced, and which, be it remembered, can in every particular be fully set forth in the words of Jesus Christ, or of his inspired apostles? But I know that it is not so. I know that this accusation against our faith is as false and groundless, as all the others which have been advanced. I grant, indeed, that our views of the gospel do not minister to any selfish, bigoted, conceited fancies, of an exclusive interest in the favour of God. But I know that the Unitarian faith affords the most enlarged views of the infinite, paternal goodness of God; that he watches in tender mercy over all his mortal and dependent creatures, that "whom he loveth he chasteneth," that his severest dispensations are all ordered in wisdom and compassion, and that under his supreme, universal government, all things are working together for good to them that love him and keep his commandments. Let no man tell me, that these simple, glorious views of the attributes and ways of God, can afford no true peace of mind in this world, unless joined to the peculiar dogmas of the Trinitarian creed. I contradict that man most positively; I say that he is grievously mistaken on this subject; and it is a case, in which I am better entitled to be believed than he is. I *know* that he is in error. I *know* that the holiest peace of mind, and the purest consolation, may flow from the Unitarian faith, in full free, and exhaustless streams.

My reverend opponent declares, to crown all his other awful accusations, that the Unitarian faith gives no hope, no prospect, of eternal happiness hereafter. Ah! there are thousands of faithful hearts that could teach him otherwise, if he were not so fondly wedded to his own sectarian fancies, that no testimony can shake him. I demand again, that my own testimony, the testimony of my own observation and experience, shall be received in this case, (which is more a question of fact than of opinion), in opposition to the testimony of a man who has probably had no experience whatever on the subject. It is not as he represents. Why should it be so? The sources of our consolation in the hour of death, are precisely those which are opened to all believing souls in the gospel, precisely those which supported the mind of the Apostle Paul, when he felt that his earthly end was approaching. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Mark, my brethren, the benovolence of the Apostle, in the utterance of these glowing sentiments: "*Not to me only, but unto all them also* that love his appearing." This is true Christian faith, hope, and charity. This is the very spirit of the gospel, embracing the prospect not merely of our own

eternal happiness, but that of all who love God and the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. On these, and not on any narrower grounds, is the Unitarian's hope of eternal felicity established. We believe in the forgiving mercy of God to all repentant sinners. We believe in the great doctrine of immortality, founded on our Saviour's promises and resurrection. We believe that he hath entered, through the veil of the flesh, into the holy of holies, even into Heaven itself, whither he is gone to prepare a place, in the mansions of his Father's house, for all who sincerely obey him. We believe that "Henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; even so saith the spirit of eternal truth, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." We believe that they will dwell together for ever, in the more immediate presence of God, whose smile is everlasting joy. These are the hopes which deprive death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. With these divine principles of faith and consolation deeply rooted in the heart, shedding their peaceful influence over every troubled scene of life, and the light of immortality over the dark valley of the shadow of death, the sincere Unitarian believer can die, as I have shewn you that the calumniated Priestley died, in charity with all men, full of confidence towards God, "in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life."

It were pleasant enough for me, my brethren, to dwell longer on these topics. But I must now bring this controversy to a close. In prosecuting this argument, it has been necessary, for me, in justice to myself, to my fellow Unitarians, and to the great principles which we espouse, to utter my mind in plainness and firmness of speech. But I have endeavoured to do so in a spirit of charity and respect towards all who are of a different persuasion. I throw myself on the candour of my Trinitarian hearers, if I have appeared to them to represent their views in any way unjustly, or unfairly. I beg to assure you, however, in conclusion, that whatever I have said, has not appeared to me wrong, but right; and that if I had known, in any instance, that I was giving an erroneous or unfair statement, either of the principles or of the arguments of Trinitarians, that consciousness should immediately have sealed my lips. Let us now withdraw to our respective churches and avocations, in peace and love towards one another. We must all have one object at heart,—to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, that this truth may make us free, wise, and happy. It is our duty to search for this truth, with humble and teachable dispositions, and with prayer to Almighty God, that he will be pleased to guide us to the knowledge of all necessary truth, and give that truth power to sanctify us, and to bless us everlastingly! Amen.

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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
UNITARIAN DOCTRINE

CONCERNING THE
SOLE DEITY OF THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST:

BEING
SIX LECTURES,

DELIVERED IN
GEORGE'S CHAPEL, EXETER,
DURING THE MONTHS OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 1835;

IN REPLY TO
The REV. DANIEL BAGOT, M. A.

By the **Rev. HENRY ACTON.**

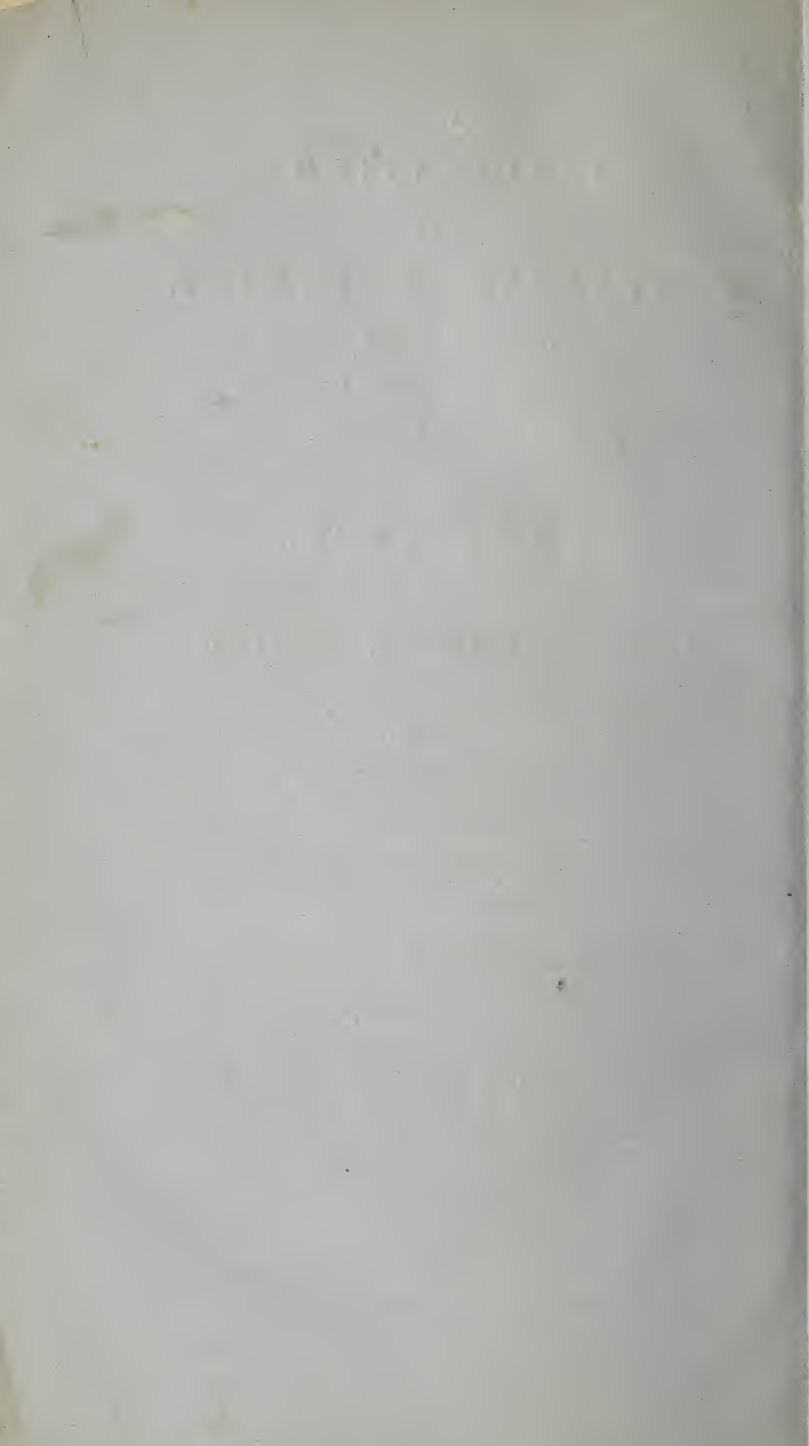
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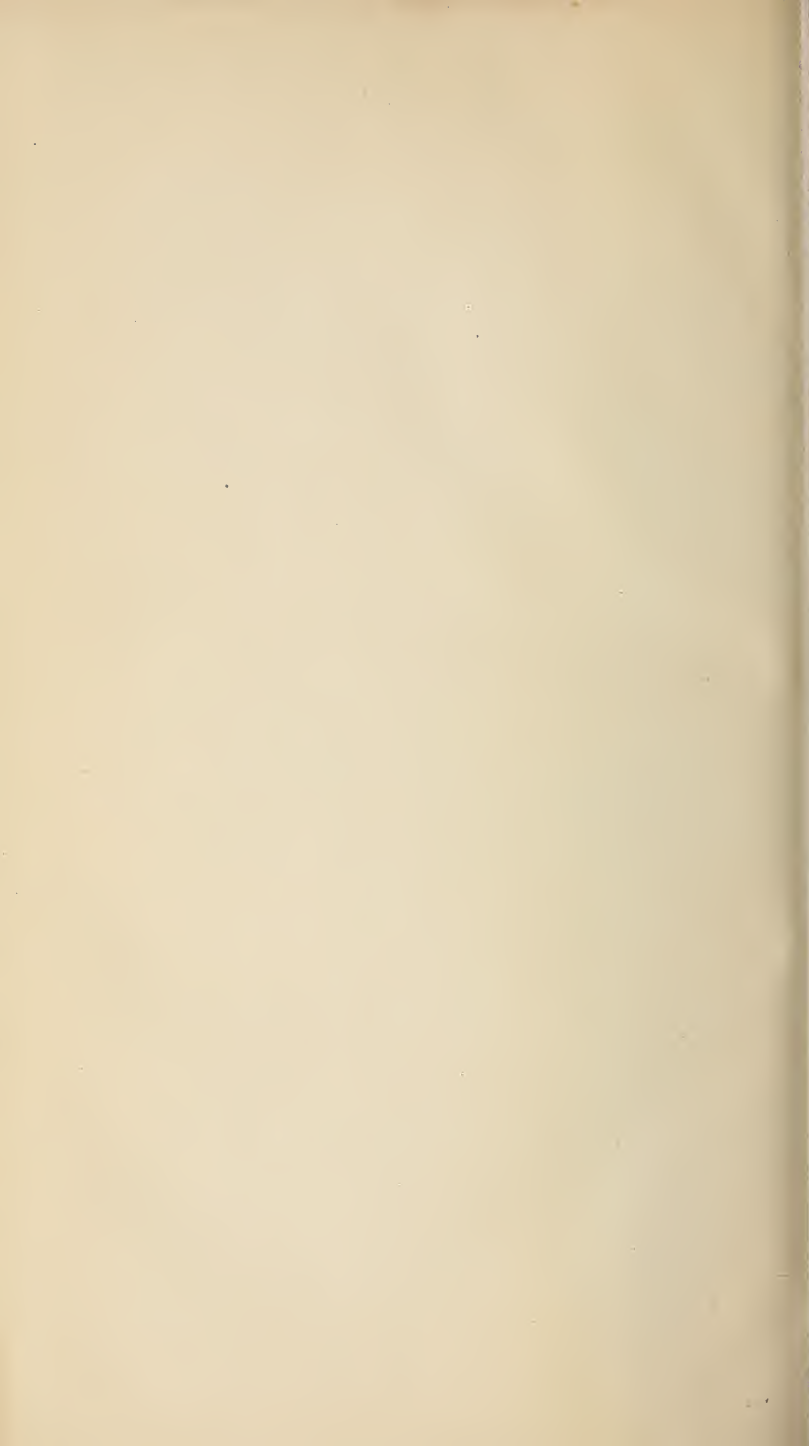
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